
FAITHFUL
AND
TRUE

THE WOODS ON FIRE.

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FAITHFUL AND TRUE;

OR,

THE EVANS FAMILY.

By the Author of

"WIN AND WEAR," "TONY STAR'S LEGACY," ETC.

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I.—MOVING.

I.

Moving.

IT was a beautiful June day. Never was the sky a deeper blue, the air softer, or more deliciously laden with the breath of flowers. Every green thing danced and quivered in its young, glad life. Brooks sang their sweetest songs, and little birds flitting over them saw their own images in the glassy mirror, and mimicked back the song in their loveliest notes. On this perfect day, along a rough road, branching off from the railway, and leading in the direction of the range of hills, which for miles and miles had stretched toward the rising sun, drove two waggons, or, in the technical language of the country, "teams." One was a curiously covered vehicle, a kind of butcher's cart; but the body of the waggon was set directly upon the axletree without springs. It was roughly made, unpainted, and had seen hard usage. The top, of coarse white cloth, though scrupulously clean, was patched and repatched, until hardly a vestige of the original

cover remained. Inside of this sat a woman, past the meridian of life, with four children, and such a quantity of little boxes, bundles, and bags, as showed travelling was not in their case merely a matter of pleasure. The carriage was driven by a lad, who, walking by the side of the horses, held the reins and a curiously-knotted whip.

The second waggon was a lumber cart, filled to the top with boxes, trunks, and various articles of house furniture, conspicuous among which was a cradle. Perched on the top rode another boy, considerably younger than the first driver, and a man, evidently the father and husband, was walking on the grass at the side of the road, trusting the management of his horses to his voice and the whip which every now and then he cracked in true mountaineer style.

Through two holes in the covered waggon, four eyes were watching everything with much curiosity. The blue eyes were perfectly dancing with fun and enjoyment. No one need see the rest of the face to know they belonged to small, pretty features, a rosebud of a mouth, and a complexion delicate and white as ivory. For the other eyes, they were grey, perhaps. But you might see them at that same hole a week, and you never would see them twice the same colour. It almost seemed as if they were chameleon eyes, and took the hue of whatever they fell upon. But these were the best part of the little girl's face to whom they

belonged; she was—I am sorry to say it, for she is to be the heroine of my book, but the truth must be told —she was downright ugly. She had a low forehead, that is, her hair, brown and stiff, grew over it; a small flat nose, that looked as if it had tried to be a pug and made a mistake, turning the wrong way; a very broad mouth, firm set, with corners that told a tale; and added to all these was such a dark complexion that you almost wondered whether there was not an exchange made in her infancy, and some strolling gipsy woman taken the white baby and left her tawny child in its place. If you watched the hole in the cover steadily, you would see that the blue eyes never moved away, but were always laughing out of the very same place, while the grey were succeeded now by some hazel, and now by some other hue, a shade lighter, and less lovely than the first.

"Oh, Norman, Norman! stop, do, please, quick, only a minute! Mother, father, can't he? Quick, quick!" Blue eyes were hastily withdrawn from the look-out, and the pretty face, far too pretty to be denied, was in an instant thrust from the front of the waggon.

"Whoa, there, Kitty—whoa, Bill. What is it, Grace?" and the boy good-naturedly stopped the horses.

"Oh, such a lovely bunch of violets! as blue as the skies, and as big as the moon! There, there! Here

I am!" and leaping over the wheel, the little girl ran to the side of the road, along which a brook was flowing, and dashing through the water, began to gather the blue violets with an eager haste, which showed how truly beautiful they were to her. In a moment the boy from the second load was by her side; and the two little children riding with their mother were also clamouring to be taken out.

"Me, Hope, me," cried the youngest, almost a baby, "me wants 'em pitty flowers."

"Well, sit still, darling. Gracy will bring you some. Grace," she called, "bring some to Guy."

"Yes, I'll bring a lot."

"I am going too! Norman, please, me down."

"No, no, Maud, keep where you are. Can't unload every time we see a flower; if we do, we shan't get home until night. Shall we, father?"

"That will do now, Grace," said the father in reply. "Come, we can't wait any longer. There is nothing but flowers all over the Green Mountains."

Grace did not appear to hear. She ran on the road, holding her apron up and filling it as fast as she could with the tempting flowers.

"Oscar, I say, Oscar, come back." But the boy was as heedless as the girl; and after calling them repeatedly without receiving any attention, Mr. Evans came to the covered waggon and said,—

"Hope, get out, and go and bring those children

back; it is the last time they will trouble us this way to-day, I am pretty sure of that."

"I thought what would come, when you let them go," said the mother, fretfully. "I expect they will be as wild and unmanageable as hawks now."

Hope, before this complaint was ended, was making all the speed she could to overtake the other children, who, suspecting her errand, ran on without looking behind them.

"Start up, Norman. We will drive off and leave them; I think that will bring them to their senses."

So the horses were once more started, driven past the children, and out of their sight without either of the drivers taking any notice of them.

Pretty soon, however, loud cries were heard; but Mr. Evans only said, "Whip up there. We'll give them a lesson in obedience to begin with."

But Norman stopped his horses. "There is Hope, father," he said; "you know how hard the poor little thing worked all day yesterday; it seems too bad to make her suffer for the others. She could only just limp along when she first got out."

"True enough; I wish I had kept her in. I would have given the others a tiring they would not soon forget; but hold on, we'll see."

Pretty soon the children came panting up. There was something in Grace's beautiful face which pled for her; the words of reproof died away from

her father's lips, and he only said, as he lifted her in,—

"Grace, when you get out again, I think I shall know it."

"Oh, father, see what splendid ones. It would have been wicked to have left a single bud, wouldn't it?" and she held down her apron for him to look at the heaped flowers.

How exactly they were the colour of her eyes, violet blue. Her father had never, it seemed to him, realized it before. "You will find acres of them at Glenburn," he said kindly, "but my little girl must learn to mind her father, as soon as he speaks—it is very wrong not to. Didn't you know it?"

"Yes, yes; I will next time; but, father, they are so very—very darling, I wanted them all."

Hope stood waiting her turn to jump in. Her father turned to lift her up. What a contrast; dear, dumpy little Hope—broad as she was long, and good as she was homely, but her father's touch was no less gentle nor his voice less affectionate as he said,—

"Hope always minds, she is my right hand man," and then Hope turned on him those grey eyes. There was not a shade of violet in them, but they were so deep, so loving, so true, that her father thought oftener of them than of the blue, after he had gone back to drive his horses again. As for Oscar, he had wisely tumbled up on to the load of baggage, and hidden

himself behind a rocking-chair. Mr. Evans forgot him, so he escaped without reproof. What a flower-lined road that was! Hardly a mile but Grace renewed her solicitations to be allowed to get out; and a very joyous company of children they made, when, having arrived at the spot where their road branched off from the main one, the waggons were stopped, and they were all taken out to eat their dinner.

While they are so doing, it may be as well to give the reader a slight account of them.

Mr. Evans had been for years a flourishing merchant in the town of Castleford, but within the last four years had had a struggling time to keep himself out of debt.

His family was large—his wife inefficient—sickness, death, and neglect made his expenditures greater than his receipts. For a time he battled manfully against the tide, but it was of no use. One thing was lost after another, and a year ago he failed, not being able to pay ten shillings in the pound. He then tried various means of support, but all in vain. His wife became more and more helpless, his children really began to suffer for the common necessities of life. He was willing to do anything for their support, but nothing could be found. At last he determined to avail himself of what his wife had always called her "patrimony," —a farm on the top of one of the Green Mountains— and to remove his family thither. This farm was

situated in the town of Glenburn, the place having been named by Mrs. Evans' father, whose ancestors were originally Scotch, and who therefore chose a name which should remind him of the glens and burns of his ancestral home. The farm consisted of several hundred acres, very little under culture, but what was cultivated being in a sunny, sheltered glen, which, mountain bound as it was, was not unlike a Highland home. Here had been erected, first a log hut, and then framed additions, until the house had a singular and not unpicturesque appearance. There had been, also, a small garden with a picket fence, and an accustomed eye could trace, in the old forest trees which had been allowed to remain, ambitious attempts at an avenue and tree-skirted lawn. Mrs. Evans' father, in designing the plan, had evidently in mind some picture of a place over the wide ocean, perhaps the ancestral domains which long years ago had passed into the hands of strangers—but we will not anticipate. When Mr. Evans proposed displacing the tenant, who had never any rent to send them but a bundle of complaints, and going themselves to occupy the farm, the poor, tired wife thought of it as a kind of paradise awaiting her. No claims of society—the society most demanding of all, that of a large town—to be kept up; no children to be dressed and sent to school for the sake of appearances; no servants, whose unpaid wages made them indolent and saucy, but a blessed independence, house

and land all their own. Mrs. Evans must be forgiven, if she thought she was about to realize all those golden dreams which she had heard her father relate after his visits to his farm when she was a child. Those grand old woods—stories of which had wiled away many a winter night, what a place in which her boys could grow to be men, and how free from temptation and excitement for her girls! Mrs. Evans, as a young lady, was very romantic. She never had a good, sensible idea of life. If it had come roughly to her, and given her, with her living and dead children, many a hard lesson which would have made a person of more mind sensible long ago, it had only brought discontent, repining, upbraiding, not downright crossness, or violence of temper, but that continual fretting, which, perhaps quicker than anything else, undermines the comfort and prosperity of a family. Mr. Evans soon after his marriage found what lot God had allotted to him in life, and he bore it as a good Christian should. Attempting to be to his children both father and mother, he found he had undertaken too much. We have seen how his business suffered in consequence; in the course of our story we shall see how as earth grew more and more dark, heaven became brighter, and how God gave to the good afflicted man "songs in the night."

With his eldest child, Norman,—Mrs. Evans gave the names to the children, and as far as practicable took pains that they should be very Scotch—a fine boy of

fourteen, he had been for several months at work in Glenburn. The tenant had left everything, both in and out of the house, in a very dilapidated condition. Discoloured walls, dropping plastering, smoking chimney, broken panes of window glass, filled with old hats or fluttering rags, doors hanging on one hinge, decayed door sills crumbling under the foot—such were some of the things which Mr. Evans found he was to take in exchange for the gas-lighted, furnace-warmed, elegant home which he was leaving in Castleford. What a task he had before him! Should he ever be able to accomplish it, unfitted as his long business life had made him for daily tasks which were more for the hand than the head? He must be carpenter, bricklayer, painter, paperer, in short, the Jack of all trades which he had hitherto so much despised. Norman, too, was a town-bred boy, fond of school, and of his books, naturally inclining much more to the refinements and amenities of life, than to the rough and tumble of backwoods experience; but, like his father, Norman had a sense of the necessities of things, which made him a very able, hopeful, and happy assistant. For months, as we have said, the two worked together, through every discouragement, and the hindrances which arose, not only from their want of experience, but also from the want of materials which could only be procured from a town ten miles distant, but at last everything was ready; neat papers have given a cheerful look

to the low rooms, and fresh paint, within and without, an air of cultivation to the whole place. Norman worked, until the very moment of starting, to meet the family whom his father had gone to bring, upon a graveled path, which led from the broken road to the little front door. Poor boy, tired as he was, he might have saved himself the trouble, for neither his mother nor sisters would have any eyes for this to-night.

We left the family taking their dinner by the roadside. No one seemed in any hurry but Mr. Evans, and at last he was obliged to bring the whole to a summary conclusion, by lifting the children forcibly into the waggons, and driving on.

Two loads of furniture had been sent to Glenburn the day before. These Norman had unpacked, and placed according to the best of his abilities; but as the party became tired, the road rougher, and even the long day wearing away, Mr. Evans cast many troubled thoughts forward to what yet remained to be done. At length they reached the last hill. It was long and steep and stony, nothing could have been better contrived for testing and wasting what little patience there was left. Up, up, up—would it never end? Not even little Guy could sleep, the road was so rough. Now the waggon was on one side, now on the other. Mrs. Evans was too frightened and weary even to complain. She sat with Guy in her arms, the picture of dumb distress. No one but Hope tried to comfort her, and she could

only do so by going over and over with the story of the five little pigs, for the amusement of Maud and Guy until she hardly knew which pig went to market and which pig stayed at home, and brought out a torrent of fretful cries from Maud, because she took Guy's fingers twice to the neglect of her own. She had exhausted that, and just began to roll "the baker's man," when Norman called, "Halloo! Three cheers for Glenburn! Here we are. Mother! Grace! Hope! Wake up there. Here we are, home at last."

What an awakened, eager set of faces looked out of the old covered cart. Sure enough, there it was! The sun had gone down, but the summer twilight wrapped the house, the trees, the garden, the high hill behind, the nodding, welcome forest, in one mantle of grey, softening everything, resting the tired travellers almost like a loving mother's face.

The lumbering vehicle stopped. Grace and Hope were first upon the ground. Grace ran eagerly in; but Hope, though she looked after her with a very longing eye, waited until she took Guy from his mother, then half-leading, half-carrying the little fellow, followed.

The rooms were much darker than it was out of doors; all the children could see, was low walls, very small windows, and heaps of furniture curiously stowed away.

Hope moved out a rocking chair, and ran to find a footstool for her mother. She had them both by the

window, before her mother came in, and led her to them, saying cheerfully,—

"Here it is, dear mother, the very old nursery chair, and the footstool with my bunch of flowers on it. Now for the little chair for Guy, and then we shall see. Grace, find Guy's chair. There it is—yes, no; that is Maud's, but it will do. Sit close by mother, baby, and we will have a nice tea all ready, pretty soon."

"Pitty soon," said Guy, patting Hope's cheek, "pitty soon—I so hungry—but I don't see any tea table. We have left the tea table, mamma; mamma, we have left the tea table," and Guy, tired and cross, began to cry at the top of his voice.

"Be still—oh, dear, Hope, he will make me crazy. What can we do? Was there ever a family in such a condition before?" Hope heard some little hysterical sobs from her mother. There was nothing she dreaded so much, nothing that made her feel so helpless. She ran to the door for her father, but he was too busy unpacking, to attend to her, she saw at a glance; so she contented herself with asking Norman, in a whisper, whether there were any lamps, and a kitchen; and where the tea table was. Norman whispered his reply, and in a very few minutes, Hope was carrying a basketful of shavings, and bits of fine board towards the kitchen stove, while Grace, in obedience to her direction, was lighting the lamps.

Very soon the cheerful light and the crackling sound

of the fire, made themselves heard and seen all over the house. How cheering and resting they were! What a *home* sound! The hysterical sobs ceased, and Guy, with his thumb in his mouth, made his appearance, led by Maud, at the kitchen door.

"That's right, darling," said Hope, looking up and stopping for a moment, using her mouth for a pair of bellows at the door of the stove, "come and blow here, while I go and hunt up the tea table." So the children sat down on their feet, and began to blow, amused immediately by the bright sparks which answered their call, while Hope found the tea-table, not the handsome mahogany one which they had used in Castleford, but one which had always stood in the hall, and was, therefore, familiar to them. In its drawer Hope had put a table-cloth in anticipation of just such a need for it, no not *just* such, for the confusion would have seemed impossible to her before, but expecting not to be able to find it readily unless she did. In a moment it was spread, and now for the cups, what could she do! The china was not taken out, only a few of the common kitchen ware.

But, while she was wondering, Grace came with a pile of the white plates edged with blue, and laid them on neatly. Yes, it was very nice; only so they could get something to eat, anything would do for to-night. So the two children helped themselves liberally out of the kitchen crate, forgetting they were all to be washed

afterwards. Mr. Evans had brought large supplies of cooked provisions with him; the charity, in part, of the attached sympathizing community he had left, and in part, the gift of an old house servant, who, having lived in Mrs. Evans' father's family in all capacities, had been transferred with her to the married home, and had until to-day, formed an inseparable part of it. Mr. Evans did not propose to bring her with them to Glenburn. He could no longer pay her even the small wages which she for the last few years had unwillingly consented to receive. To all her propositions of working for her board, he turned a deaf ear. She would be lonely and unhappy in so quiet a home. Indispensable as she was to them, they must part. Winny cried many hours over it when she was alone, and quietly determined to hire a room and *wait*. Mrs. Evans was as helpless as a baby, and as for the children, poor things, why it was always Winny this and Winny that, as much as if there was no other person but Winny in the world. Winny dropped tears into every article she packed, she dropped prayers too; those deep, heartfelt prayers, which are wrung from the human heart when God is dealing with it, by taking away those we love. These children were to her the very "apple of her eye," and they must go. With such feeling, it may be supposed, there was no half service in what Winny did for them; one special basket had been set aside for this very tea, and now Grace and Maud came bringing it in,

as if it were as heavy as they could both lift. And well it might be, for never were more delicacies packed in so small a compass before; the hungry children's eyes danced with joy as they took them out, and Grace, with a taste which formed one of her principal characteristics, arranged them on the table, quite artistically, with her mountain flowers. Really it was a pretty show, and might have tempted a far more dainty company than this.

There was the very home bell. How would it sound? When everything was ready, Grace took it to the door and rang it. Far and near it sounded,—this first home call. The echoes of the mountains woke up to repeat it; the trees whispered it to one another; wild birds opened their sleepy eyes, and peeped out from their cosy nests at its call; and timid animals ran and hid themselves, scared at the first sound of civilization.

Mr. Evans and Norman came laughing in from the barn, where they had been busy stabling their horses. "There is no doubt who is here, father," said Norman, "we have been a great many nights without hearing it before."

"It sounds like home, doesn't it, Norman?"

"And like Hope."

"Like Hope—yes Norman, there is a new meaning in our little Hope's name to-night. God grant that it may be a presage of better days."

"All right, father; we shall get on now; the worst is over. But how shall we sleep to-night?"

"We will sleep almost any way. Only see that your mother is comfortable."

"I attended to that yesterday. Her own bedstead is up in her room, thanks to Winny, with her very mattress, pillows, and coverlet. I wonder if she has been in there yet?"

"You are a thoughtful boy, Norman," said his father, with a look which the son dearly prized.

"Home! home!" shouted Norman, as he opened the door into the well-lighted kitchen. "This looks like a palace, girls; why, what a sumptuous tea; I haven't seen anything like it these six months."

Well might Norman say so, for he had often gone to bed having eaten a dry biscuit, with a glass of fresh water for his tea, since his mountain residence.

Mrs. Evans sat at the head of her table, pale, but with a smile on her face.

"God sends it," said Mrs. Evans fervently; "let us give thanks." With bowed heads for the first time in the new home, the father invoked God's blessing on it and on them all. The memory of its touching simple fervour sank into the heart of every child present, and was never forgotten.

Hasty arrangements were made after the meal was ended for sleeping. As Norman had said, his mother's room was entirely comfortable. The weary woman was

grateful when she sought it; grateful to her husband, to her children, and to her God. These were new feelings for Mrs. Evans. Has God at last touched her? We shall see.

Night falls around them; sleep waits for them here as gently and as lovingly as in the richer house of the old home. Pleasant dreams come to their pillows, and in the still night-time they rest in the new home, happy and careless as the children of an easier lot.


II.—THE NEW HOME.

II.

The New Home.

THE next morning Hope was up with the birds, notwithstanding she had gone to bed so weary the night before. She had made Norman promise to awaken her, and now she crept off from her bed on the floor, stiff and sore, but with a cheerful, sunny heart. The New Home! She thought never had anything been so beautiful as it was, with the June morning sun shining brightly upon it. Down from the mountain came mingling a full chorus of morning hymns. Birds and leaves, brooks and low singing pine trees, insects with their soft hum, and the distant lowing of the cattle; these were all new to Hope, and after listening for a few moments in delighted silence, she broke forth into the sweetest song of all. It was not loud; even Grace, who never slept soundly, did not waken; but it was laden with a simple, loving child's devotion, and God heard and treasured it. So much to do, where could she begin? The busy head was confused by such a sudden

coming of new duties; and for a few minutes after her hymn was ended, and Hope had asked God's guidance and blessing for the day, she stood irresolute. Oh, for Winny, if she could drop in only one hour, just to tell her what to do first. Here was a house to be put right, breakfast to be prepared, the children to be washed and dressed, and only—so it seemed to Hope—her two little hands to do it all. She never once thought of waking Grace, and asking her to assist her; for though two years younger, she had long ago learned, that in some mysterious way, her mother and Grace were never expected to be useful. If there were flowers to arrange, or any tasteful, pleasant thing to be done, then it was always, "where *is* Grace?" but for plain, common work, never. Hope had always, ever since she could remember, been everybody's "right-hand man," as her father called her. With her father, mother, and the children, and even Winny, it was always Hope, and Hope was always ready. So now this morning, after a few fervent wishes for Winny, the task began, and considering that she was only ten, with a good deal of judgment and system. It was too early to get breakfast; she would unpack what she could without making a noise; and as the kitchen articles were those most likely to be needed first, she went on tiptoe and commenced vigorously unloading the barrels which had been rolled in. What a nice pantry it was! Hope carried each thing in, and chose a place for it, so as fast as she worked,

she had a look of completeness to reward her. She had arranged all the lower shelves, and was wondering how she could reach the upper ones without Grace, who was so much taller, when two strong arms pulled her up from the box into which she had climbed, that she might more easily reach the things at the bottom of it; and Norman, who had come in without her hearing him, said:—

"Good morning, Birdie—at work already, making the nest, are you? Well, I have come to help."

"Oh, Norman, I am so glad! Take me out. I have such a lot for you to do; and four hands are a great deal better than two."

"Especially when they are twice as large, and can reach twice as far as number one; but you have worked like a beaver; Winny herself could not have beaten you."

Hope laughed,—such a happy laugh, it had more music in it to the boy than the whole chorus of outdoor singers to whom he had been listening for the last hour. He lifted Hope out, kissing her heartily as he did so, and calling her other pretty names beside his pet one of "Birdie." Hope's grey eyes lighted with a look which no one ever called into them but Norman. How easy everything would be now he had come. It was almost as if hard work had suddenly been changed into play.

Norman, boy like, could not work as still as Hope.

He knocked many things down, so the sound morning naps of the other children were soon broken, and first Grace made her appearance, fortunately for all concerned more intent on domestic duties than ever before, and the very best of help she was too. No one could work more quickly, or with more adroitness. It seemed to Hope as if her handy way of doing things accomplished more in ten minutes than she had done alone in an hour, and she watched her with a pride and pleasure which often found vent in words of praise.

"Put down the parlour carpet and arrange the parlour the first thing, Norman," said Grace, assuming the eldest daughter's place, as she liked to, when it was in the way of directing.

"Hope began in the kitchen," said Norman dryly. "She thought we must have wherewithal to eat, and had an inkling that there was a breakfast to come off, without any Winny to get it."

"Well, to be sure, but after breakfast, mamma must have a parlour to sit in. You don't expect her to live in the kitchen, I hope, Mr. Norman."

"No, of course not. I rather think you are right, Grace, and if Hope can manage here alone, you and I will nail down that carpet in less than no time."

"Then we can move all the parlour furniture in there, and have it out of the way. Oh, Norman! look! look! Isn't it Paradise. How perfectly magnificent!" Grace had caught her first view of the glory of the morning,

and Norman, as he saw how delighted she was, gave her up for lost. "No more that is practical out of that giddy head," he said, "I wish I had shut the window blinds."

But he was mistaken for once. Grace took one long fond look, as if she would take in the whole scene, in order to be able to carry it away with her, then turned cheerfully from it. "There is a great deal that is practical, as you call it, in me," she said, "only no one ever believes it."

"Handsome is that handsome does," said Norman, laconically, "and here is the carpet. Father fitted it ready to go down, as soon as it came. Set to work now, like somebody, and we'll see if we can't have it ready by the time mother is up."

Norman had assisted his father in fitting, so he had no difficulty now in arranging it, and as Oscar had made his appearance, and was ready to run with hammer and tacks wherever needed, in a very short time the parlour was in order. To be sure, it was *children's order*, and perhaps, not in exact accordance with the rule of more experienced housekeepers.

Still the room looked very cheerful and homelike, when Mrs. Evans, pale and much dispirited, came into it. How could she help yielding to its gentle influence. Her children were quite satisfied to see her sitting in the rocking-chair without fretting or finding fault.

In the meantime Hope had prepared the breakfast.

but not without sundry accidents and mistakes, which she did not know how to rectify. Maud and Guy had to be washed and dressed, and, then, in their attempts to aid her, made so much more work than they could do, to all of which Hope tried to be patient and kind, though to do so required a great deal of effort, for already she was an overtasked child.

The breakfast, however, was very welcome to all; her father had been at his work since early sunrise, and brought home with him a keen appetite, which was easily satisfied. Indeed, his heart was lighter when he saw the handiwork of his children, and gathered the happy faces around him in this independent home, than it had been since his troubles began. It was no wonder, then, that in the family prayers this morning he found much to thank God for, and that consecrating this new home, he brought it with its uncertainties, its anxieties, its hopes, and its fears, and laying it at his Saviour's feet, prayed that he would enter it with them and abide there, in the gentle blessings of his love.

All day, Mr. Evans remained in the house, and before night one could hardly recognise the cottage at Glenburn. His creditors had requested him not to part with such family relics as would add to the comfort and happiness of his young family in their desolate mountain home; he had, therefore, retained such things as were of small pecuniary value, though priceless to them from association, and, now, familiar pictures looked

down upon them from the low walls, and favourite articles of furniture met them in every room. The cottage was commodious; there seemed no end to its nooks and crannies. "There was a place just made for everything," Hope said, and so it seemed. On the falling of the second twilight, after they reached Glenburn, everything was somewhat settled, home-like, and comfortable, though Grace insisted it was very like Robinson Crusoe's life, only, instead of being on a desert island, they were on a desert mountain, with nothing around them but the native inhabitants, bears, wolves, tigers, lions, and here and there a strolling Indian tribe.

Not a house was within miles of them; not a person ever passed their door; indeed, the approach to their house branched off from the main road a half mile to the east. This it was Mrs. Evans' father's design to have made into a broad and magnificent avenue; but it was now only a broken and rough cart path.

When the first hurry of settling down was over, Grace's fever in household employments came to a sudden close. It was so beautiful out of doors, so very, very tempting. The idea of staying in, waiting for the teakettle to boil, to make the coffee, when there was such a concert under the old trees near by! Never were the flowers so sweet as when wet with the earliest dew, and never was the air so cool and

tempting as when freshened with the misty morning breeze.

Mr. Evans did not know that the breakfast he sat down to, Hope had prepared with her own little hands, without any one to help her. Grace was already back, the freshest and sweetest mountain flower of them all, and he was as rested and refreshed by looking at her, as by the food he ate. After breakfast, Mrs. Evans, in her languid way, tried to superintend the work, but the result generally was that every child in the house became fretted and out of temper, but Hope. She sent them so many ways at the same time; ordered a thing done and undone; and, indeed, it was pitiable to see how quickly she threw confusion and discord into everything she touched. Grace escaped as soon as possible, Oscar followed her, and Hope and the little ones were left to make the best of the time, and do the work as they could. Hope never complained, dear, patient, little Hope; it was not that she loved the beautiful mountain scenes any less than Grace; but she was too faithful, too true, to leave a known duty for a pleasure. It was not any matter whether she was happy or not, she never had time to ask herself that question, but it was of consequence whether she was performing the task which belonged to her. She never felt that she deserved any credit because she prepared the breakfast, while Grace was walking; the point was, whether the meal was ready,

when her tired father and Norman came in from the field.

So passed the first week,—a weary, long, dismal week to Hope; she had no leisure to enjoy anything until the work at night was ended, and the children in bed: then she was so tired; her head and her feet ached, and throbbed; she longed for her bed and quiet, and not even Norman could tempt her out with him to visit some of those lovely spots he had found and anticipated so much pleasure in showing her. Norman watched her with anxious and tender eyes. Always away with his father in the fields, he had no idea how much was thrown upon Hope; he wondered to see her, even in this one week, grow so pale and thin, and after endeavouring in vain to account for it, he called his father's attention to it.

Mr. Evans had not noticed the change; he had more care of the farm than he could well endure; he had had an indefinite idea that none of the children could be sick in this health-giving mountain region, and that his wife would rouse herself to meet an emergency when it fairly pressed upon her; but when he noticed Hope he was grieved at the sudden change. She was darker and smaller than ever, and the black rings, so surely indicative in childhood of exhausting nervous energies, were plainly visible around her eyes. What was to done? Mr. Evans had been obliged to ask himself this question so many times during the past

few years, that it became almost habitual to him, and as habitual, the undecided answer. He thought of Winny, and would have regretted that he had not brought her with him, but his conscience told him that he was right, and he looked about as helplessly as a man generally does in any housekeeping trouble. Hope must not suffer, come what would. So the next morning after Norman had called his attention to her, he said to him as he was at work by his side, "Go home, Norman, and see how matters are going with Hope; watch a little without her knowing that you are there."

Norman gladly obeyed; going round a back way he saw Oscar, whose duty it was to bring the water from the spring, tend the fires, wipe the dishes, rub knives and forks, and make himself generally useful, sitting down by the brook which fed the spring, busily engaged constructing a water-wheel. This was evidently no new occupation, for everything was arranged with a skill which told of many hours of labour. The water-pail stood empty by his side.

"So," thought Norman; "and in the meantime what does Hope do for water?" The question no sooner passed through his mind than it was immediately answered. Hope made her appearance with a large tin pail in her hand, and as she came in sight, Oscar, who was so seated, that while he could see her, she could not see him, crept away on all fours, and hid himself behind a bunch of raspberry bushes.

"Oscar! Oscar!" she called, but no Oscar answered; so filling the pail she carried, she returned quickly home. Norman could hardly resist the temptation to spring upon Oscar, shake him roughly, and order him to carry the pail immediately, particularly as he saw the look of joy with which Oscar came out, put his fingers on his nose in the direction in which Hope was disappearing, and with a laugh of delight went again to his play; but Norman laid up his wrath for another time, and followed Hope at a short distance to the house. Coming to the back door, which she had left open, he stationed himself so that he could look in, and stood very still. For some time Hope seemed to be alone, bustling around the kitchen, but soon his mother came in. "Hope!" she said; "how slow you are, here you have not the breakfast dishes washed yet, and it's almost ten."

"I am working as fast as I can, mother, but there are a great many of them; more than ever, it seems to me, to-day."

"Always some excuse. Now let them alone, and take the duster into the parlour; you might write your name on every article of furniture there."

"But, mother, my water is so nice and hot now, only see how it smokes;" and the child lifted her red hand out of it, and held it up imploringly.

"There, now, you have spilt it over, right upon your clean apron; I wonder how you expect I am ever

going to get so much washing done. Here is the butter left up here close by the stove; who ever saw such carelessness? Carry it down to the cellar."

"There are big rats there," said Hope, timidly; "Oscar said he saw four yesterday."

"Rats! dear me, what a hole this is." And Mrs. Evans cast as frightened a look as Hope at the cellar door, while she stood helplessly holding up a small jar of butter. "Where is Oscar?"

"I don't know, mother; gone away to play somewhere."

"And Grace, too, she has gone away to play, I suppose; always here, under one's feet when one does not wish them, and gone when one does; who is to take this down now? see it is melting already. I never saw such unpardonable carelessness."

"I can take it," said Hope, wiping her hands quickly, "only those rats. I don't like them."

"They are perfect pests; why can't the cat be put there?"

"We left her at Castleford."

"What didn't we leave at Castleford! I thought your father said he meant to have things enough here to be comfortable, and it has been nothing but discomfort and annoyance ever since we came."

Hope disappeared down the cellar stairs with the butter, which, though in a small jar, was evidently heavier than the child in her fright could well carry.

Norman heard a fall—a loud scream, and in a moment he stood at the cellar door. Hope had fallen with the jar, and now lay motionless at the bottom of the stairs. The mother was at the door as soon as Norman, but he sprang down, lifted the child, and brought her up immediately. Hope was stunned, and with a deep cut over her right eye from which the blood was flowing in a stream. "Water!" said Norman, with lips as pale and stiff as Hope's. "Water, mother, quick!"

Mrs. Evans took the tin pail Hope had just brought in, and Norman turned it over Hope's face so suddenly, that she gave a few faint gasps and breathed again, but did not open her eyes.

"Oh, she is killed. Hope! Hope! don't you hear your mother call you?"

"Call father, ring the bell, run for him, he is down in the first wheat lot."

He might as well have told his mother he was in another planet; she made an ineffectual attempt to find the bell, then to find her bonnet, but failing in both, she returned in a bewildered way, and stood by Hope's side. Norman, when he became fully convinced that she was not dead, seemed to recover his self-possession. Laying Hope carefully down, he directed his mother to bathe the blood off from her temples while he sounded the large horn, kept for the purpose of distant calls, for his father's return. He then relieved his mother, stopped the noise of the little

children, who, called by the horn, came running in, and began to cry boisterously, and before his father came, Hope was laid upon her mother's bed, still unconscious, but giving more signs of life.

A few words explained the accident, and Mr. Evans immediately adopted vigorous means for her recovery, which were successful. Hope opened her eyes and soon sat up; the first words she spoke were,—

"One, two, four rats—oh, how dreadful! Norman! Norman!" Then she shrieked so loud and frightfully that every one was alarmed.

"Send for the doctor, do, do," said her mother, wringing her hands. "Hope will die, I know she will. My child will die."

"Shall I go for the doctor?" asked Norman, releasing himself a little from Hope's frantic hold.

"There is no physician in less than ten miles. We will wait and see."

"Wait and see! why the child will die," broke in Mrs. Evans.

"I think not, she is better already, only confused. Hope, don't you know me?"

"Yes, father; where am I? I thought I was falling down stairs, and the rats were eating me."

"You did fall down stairs, but you are now safe on your mother's bed. Look up and see if you don't know where you are."

A pleasant smile that came immediately over Hope's

A SERIOUS FALL.

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face told that she did. Her father felt her pulse, and finding there was no fever, told Norman to sit down quietly by her while he went in search of Grace and Oscar. Norman had taken the first opportunity to relate to his father all that he had learned since he came to the house, and now his father took his measures accordingly. He found Oscar still at work on the mill-dam, the empty water-pail lying beside him.

"Oscar," he said in a grieved tone, as the startled boy endeavoured once more to hide himself, "is this being faithful? Go to the house, and to your mother's room; see what lesson Hope will teach you there."

Oscar filled his pail, and having made sure he was obeyed, Mr. Evans went in search of Grace. For a long time he called her in vain, at length a clear, sweet voice answered him from high up among the trees,—"Coming, father," and in a moment, with a basket filled with large wild strawberries and cheeks as red as they were, Grace made her appearance. There was in her face no consciousness of having done wrong, as there was in Oscar's. She was perfectly thoughtless, careless of everything that did not tend to the gratification of an immediate wish. Her father knew this, he knew too, that, with a wise mother, Grace would be a tractable, obedient child. She needed always telling what to do, if it was for anybody beside herself; and very frequently she was quite willing and happy in doing it, but she had not in her nature that inherent sense of

faithfulness that made her look for a duty that was not obtruded very plainly upon her.

Her father, as he went home with her, pointed out to her the unpardonable selfishness and thoughtlessness of her course, and Grace, when she heard of Hope's accident and how overtasked she had been for the last week while she had been so careless and happy, shed torrents of repentant tears, and promised her father and herself over and over, that she never would do the same thing again. One would have thought to have seen her weeping over, and kissing Hope, that she had been the sole cause of the misfortune. No one could be more tender or thoughtful as a nurse. Norman, after a little while, decided to give her his place, while he took Hope's in the kitchen, but his father sent him back. These duties belonged to Grace, and she must learn in this first settling down in the new home, that there were other interests and cares besides those centering solely in herself.

Grace obeyed his summons reluctantly. It was far pleasanter petting Hope than cooking dinner, but her father was decided. She knew the arch of his eyebrows too well to dispute it, so after one or two half fretful attempts to get along the easiest way, her good nature returned, and she went to work in real, hearty earnest.


III.—WINNY.

III.

Winny.

IN a few days Hope was well, though she still wore an unseemly patch over her eye. Grace insisted that its presence made Hope quite an invalid, and treated her accordingly. She was unwilling to have her do anything around the house which required the least exertion, and showed a kindness and forethought inconsistent with her former character, which won for her many words of praise from both her father and mother; Mrs. Evans, too, treated Hope with peculiar tenderness; Oscar hung around her as if he wanted to make amends for all past neglect, and, in short, for the first time in her life, Hope was quite a heroine.

One afternoon, just a week from the time Hope had fallen down the cellar stairs, Grace had brought the large nursery rocking chair into the kitchen, arranged it with another chair with a pillow in it before the window, and persuaded Hope, though with more than

usual difficulty, to occupy it, while she mopped up the kitchen floor. Now this was an exploit which had not been performed since they had been at Glenburn, and as the kitchen work had been almost entirely done by the children, it may be imagined that it stood somewhat in need of the operation. Grace was prepared for a fine frolic. She had often watched Winny at home, and had no idea but with Hope to suggest, she should have a floor as spotless as need be. Maud and Guy were delighted at the prospect; it was something going on, and that always pleases children. After much teasing, they were allowed to come into the kitchen, provided they would be contented to sit upon the table and keep very still. This they promised; accordingly, when Hope was installed in the rocking chair, with her feet stretched out on the pillowed seat, they were lifted on to the table and tucked snugly away. Grace was in her element, this excitement was as good as a scramble on the mountains, perhaps a little better, for she had more to share it with her. She brought out the long-handled mop and the pail used for such purposes, then tucked her short dress and white skirt under her waist as she had seen Winny. She wished she had long sleeves to roll up, but alas! they were short already, and though she pinned the frill up it was simply ridiculous. What a musical sound the boiling water made as it came tumbling down from the nose of the teakettle into the pail.

"Cascade number one," said Grace, making a variety of leaps with the hot kettle.

"Take care," called out Hope from her chair, "or you will scald yourself."

"Shan't do it, grandmarm; did you ever see Winny scald herself with the teakettle, I should just like to know?"

"She never makes any cascades," said Guy gleefully.

"No, indeed, she don't; she don't know what cascades are, does she, Guy? You and I do. There—there—now, that is a beauty; see how the soap bubbles up; I wish you could peep in."

Maud and Guy scrambled down and peeped in, but the steam was not as pleasant as the bubbles, and Hope, in momentary expectation of their being scalded, sent them back.

"Here it goes," said Grace, putting down the kettle and dipping in the mop. "Now for it, a real flood—deluge—Noah's ark and all."

"Then this is Ararat," said Maud.

"I imagine so; yes, you may play that is Ararat, and the top of the table is the ark."

"Then the animals! Oh, give us some animals first, please do, Grace."

"Well, here is an elephant," taking up a large stick of wood, "and here is a camel." Then followed a footstool, "This is a rhinoceros, and this a pig. Here

is a cow, and here a horse." Grace looked around, there were no other articles near, and her mop-stick was balancing ominously on the top of the pail. "That will do now. Hope is one of the wicked families that could not get into the ark; so here goes the deluge right flat in her face." Grace lifted the mop higher than she anticipated, and Hope got a little of the hot water most unceremoniously dashed over her.

"Take care, Grace, it's as hot as mustard. I had rather climb into the ark."

Grace laughed such a merry laugh. "No, no, you sit still, I won't do it again; don't you know Winny never puts the water but once in the same place. I declare, Hope, there is a perfect mud-puddle under your chair. How shall I get at it."

"Your dress is down dragging in it," shouted Maud. Grace took her dripping hands and tucked the dress up again, then tried to squeeze the mop in under Hope's chair.

"Let me move," said Hope.

"No, no, sit still, I've done it now. It's all running out this way, like the streams Oscar dams up, mud and all."

"Did you sweep the kitchen first," asked Hope, as she saw the thick, black water rolling down.

"Sweep! no, indeed, what would be the use? I rather think a mop and hot water ought to do for once."

Down went another mopful of water in another di-

rection, then another and another, until the kitchen floor was perfectly afloat.

Grace's refractory dress was down again; and after a few more ineffectual attempts to make it mind, she gave it up; and, consequently, it was soon wet above her knees, but this was only the greater fun, and, wild with the sport, she was turning and plashing the water every way, up on to the clean new paint of the floor-boards, and doors, even to the window sills themselves, when Hope suddenly called out,—

"Grace! Grace! here is a waggon; who can it be?"

"A waggon? where? how?" and Grace dropped her mop so suddenly that she upset what little water remained in the pail, and the children, jumping down at the same moment to run to the window, came in for a liberal supply of its contents. Even Hope, though she tried to step very carefully along to the door, could not escape it; and such a dirty, wet, miserably neglected set of children as presented themselves when the waggon stopped, seldom makes its appearance, even at the door of an Irish hovel.

"You've made a mistake," said a sharp voice from inside the covered waggon. "I told you Mr. Evans at Glenburn, not this Irish house; what upon arth do you think I want to stop here for?"

"This is Mr. Evans', marm," said the driver. "I fetched him up here the first time he came; and a lot better looking place it is now than then, I can tell you.

There be his children, four on 'em, you can ax them if you misbelieve me."

"His children, four on 'em," repeated the voice, with an additional sharpness, "I should think you had better borrow my spectacles." But at the same time the bonnet made its appearance over the man's hat, and the children saw Winny's well-known face.

"O Winny! Winny! It's dear, darling Winny!" they shouted in full chorus.

"Surely," said the woman, "it be them arter all; why, what on arth has come to them?"

The man laughed, jumped out; and after some time, having handed out a variety of little bundles, Winny came to the front of the waggon.

The children stood calling her very impatiently, ready to spring upon her; but she extended her arms towards them in a threatening manner, saying, "Go away, every one on ye; why, I never saw such a dirty pack in my life."

"It's nothing but water," said Grace, who seized one of the outstretched arms, and began to hug and kiss it violently. The others followed her example. Winny's attempts to keep them at a distance, fairly broke down before the torrent of their boisterous welcome. Guy's muddy boots were clinging fast round her spotless stockings, while Maud, and Hope, and Grace, encircled her with their arms in tiers. Grace, who was much the tallest, coming fairly up to her best muslin collar,

and crumpling it with her damp hands in a most destructive way.

Winny kissed first one and then another, over and over again, always finding a pair of lips waiting for her, turn which way she would.

The driver of the waggon, who had had rather an unpleasant ride with the "cross old maid," looked on in much amusement. It was his loud laugh which first recalled Winny to a sense of her situation, and made her make most desperate exertions to be free. She shook off first one child and then another, ordered the man to carry her "traps into the kitchen way, and set them down there." Then followed the children, who noisily led her right in to the front door, through the hall, to the opposite kitchen door from that where the man was depositing the luggage.

"What do you call this 'ere place?" she said, stopping abruptly, as her eye fell on the muddy floor, the table piled up with a curious variety of articles; Hope's rocking-chair and pillows, and everything else which could make "confusion worse confounded."

"This," said Grace, a little abashed by its appearance, "why, this is our nice new kitchen."

"Pig-sty, I should think!" said Winny, with a peculiar snort, which somewhat resembled the noise made by a frightened horse, and was her way always of expressing her indignation when it lay too deep for words. "Here, man, leave them 'ere things out of

door, it's a lot cleaner there than here; this is their pig-sty."

"Why, Winny Dole, what a woman!" said Maud, "it is our kitchen, our pig-sty is out by the barn."

"And we ha' got twelve sich pitty 'ittle pigs," broke in Guy, "so long,"—measuring with his little fingers—"and as white as snow, oh do, Winny, come and see 'em, come, come!"

"But Winny can't come," she said. "Why, there is more work here than I can get through in a month. "This is getting along without *me*, I should think!"

"I was mopping the floor," said Grace, recovering from her first embarrassment, "and if you had not come for an hour, you would have seen it looking like wax work."

Another expressive snort. "Pretty wax work," said Winny; "but where is your mamma? I must get these duds off and go to work as quick as I can."

"I will finish it," said Grace, stepping in, but a resolute arm held her fast.

"You just go and take off them wet rags, that is all you have got to do; don't you let me catch you at this work again. I never seen such a place in all my life."

"Pooh! Winny, you are making a great fuss about nothing. See how we have done without you, and we ain't dead or buried, a single one of us."

Winny looked as if she thought they might almost as well be, as to be in the situation she found them,

but she only asked again impatiently for their "ma," and followed them into their mother's room.

Mrs. Evans, who was heartily tired and discouraged with their way of life, gave her a welcome hardly less enthusiastic than that of the children.

"I know'd how it would be," said Winny, wiping her eyes, "I know'd you couldn't get along without your old Winny, no more nor she could without you, so there we are even, and now, Miss Evans, if you will tell me what chamber is to be mine, I will get on my work clothes and start about it."

Here was a dilemma. Mr. Evans had made no arrangements for "hired help," so Winny's "chamber" bid fair to be difficult to find.

"Well, I am sure, I don't know," said Mrs. Evans, in a troubled voice; "you know we didn't expect you."

"Never you bother your head then." Winny knew the tone only too well. "You jist keep quiet here, and I'll find a hole big enough to stow away somewhere." So Winny shut the door, and, accompanied by all the children, commenced the search. "Here it is, I told you I should find it," she said at last, stoping in a pleasant little attic over the kitchen. "Two windows, a closet, place for bedstead, chairs, and more traps than I brought with me. You are sure your father don't want this for nothing else?"

"Yes, very sure," the chorus answered.

"Well, then, give me a lift, and we will have them all up out of the way afore he comes home."

Then commenced a series of running up and down the "handy back stairs," until every article was in its place. The children were then most unceremoniously dismissed, and in an incredibly short time Winny made her appearance, dressed in her common working clothes; but such a tucking up as was necessary before she would enter into the offending precincts! Grace, who stood by watching her, learned some new lessons in the art, and did not wonder at her own failure. But it was curious to see how daintily Winny stepped in at last. One would have thought she, in truth, believed it was the "pig-sty" to have seen her. Not a child was allowed to put a foot over the door sill; any attempt to do so being immediately followed by one of those explosions with which Winny guarded her kitchen when she found it necessary. To have heard her, any one would supposed she was the greatest shrew in the world. She was entirely silent, knocking round the furniture from right to left, and casting, as her eyes came in contact with some new wonder of disorder, upbraiding looks towards the group of children at the door. After half an hour they became tired of this, and ran away to take off their wet clothes and prepare themselves for the first good, free play out of doors they had had, all together, since they came to Glenburn. When, a little later than usual, Mr. Evans left the field

to return home, he did so with many misgivings as to the scenes which awaited him. He had missed Hope very much in the house arrangements, but was too well pleased with the spirit evinced by Grace to have any desire to interfere; still he saw very plainly that no family could go on for any length of time as his were living now, without bringing a train of discomforts and positive disasters, such as he should be very sorry to see. He had spent many troubled thoughts that day in wondering how he could make a change, and was, as we have said, returning home to-night, anxious and troubled.

He was surprised to find the house so still as he came to the back door. He listened, but there was not a single child's voice in the kitchen; pushing the door quickly open, he saw Winny standing by the cooking stove with her hands folded in precisely the old attitude, looking as if she had never been away from it, or, more literally, it away from her.

She turned slowly as he came in, and as soon as she saw him, burst into a loud fit of weeping.

"I couldn't help it, Mr. Evans," she said, "I tried to do it, but it wasn't no use. I went to Miss Jenkins' a-washing, but it wasn't no good. I went to Miss Comstock's a-making cake, but it was jist the same. I couldn't do it no how, Mr. Evans—I had to come—"

"Well, Winny," said Mr. Evans, extending his hand

cordially to her, "I am very glad to see you; we have missed you very much."

"Then you won't say nothing about them wages, will you, Mr. Evans? cause it ain't no use; it can't be, you see, and what can't be can't be, and where is the good of talking? I hope I see you well, Mr. Evans; where is Norman? I ain't set my eyes on him."

"He is on his way home from the field; you know we are farmers here, Winny; where are the other children?"

"Sich a looking set, I never seed in all my born days—never!"

Here Winny related to Mr. Evans the scene of her coming. He could readily believe it, and as he glanced around at the perfectly neat kitchen, he said,—

"Well, you must have been pretty busy since you came, to have made it look so, now."

"I've been pretty busy, but it's nothing to speak of yet. You'll have tea soon, I suppose?"

"Any time you please; what have you done with the tea table?"

"Set it where it belongs. Hope said this was to be the dining room," opening the door into a neat little room, as yet unused, "so, after a proper sight of hunting, I found the things, about half on 'em; but if you'll let me stay, Mr. Evans, we will soon know head from tail, all over this midget of a house."

"I shall be very thankful to have you stay, Winny; indeed, I had become quite convinced that we could

not get along without you; I will make every effort to pay you your wages punctually, but I cannot promise you that I shall."

"Now, Mr. Evans, it's the born truth, if there ever was one, that the very first sixpence you offer me, I'll up and go; ain't it enough for me that the Lord has had marcy on a poor lone creature, and drawed her back here whether she would or no, and put it into your heart to say, 'Winny, though you are a poor, imperfect creatur, still you are better nor nobody, and you may have a home in this here little house as long as the Lord pleases.' Dear me, Mr. Evans, if you had heard them children a-callin' and a-callin' as I have heard them, and felt that kind of a load no matter whether you was asleep or awake, you would bless the Lord as I do that you were where they were flesh and blood, and you could—could—" here Winny broke down, but her eye happening that minute to rest upon the plates of fresh biscuits, she finished her sentence with, "make bread for them when they wanted it. The good Lord be praised for all his marcies. And now, sir, as it's all settled, we'll ring the bell and have our tea."

Winny had a peculiarly impressive way of ringing that tea-bell; the children all recognised it; even Norman and Oscar, who did not yet know of her arrival, felt that they must not linger, and from them Winny had a noisier but no less hearty welcome than from the rest of the family.


IV.—THE FRENCH FAMILY.

IV.

The French Family.

VERY much relieved from his domestic cares by the arrival of Winny, Mr. Evans worked with more heart upon his farm; but, do his best, it was slow, hard work, and his progress was lamentably tardy for the swift coming on of the short mountain season. It became evident to him before July was through that he must have efficient and experienced help, so he consulted with a farmer higher up in the mountain, who was famous for the skill and economy with which he managed his farm. This man, Mr. Norton, gave it as his opinion that Mr. Evans would, by persevering in the attempt to do alone, lose far more than he gained; he recommended to him a Frenchman, who had been in his employment for years, but who now wanted to take a farm on shares rather than work for wages, as he had a rapidly increasing family, and the ability to manage as well as work. It was late for planting, but some more might be done, and at any rate the hay had

always been the most productive part of the farm, and this, of course, Mr. Evans could not manage without extra help.

The man's name was Louis Brosseau, and with him, through Mr. Norton, satisfactory arrangements were soon made. He was to fit up and occupy with his family, a wife and four children, a small building which had been built for a sugar-house, but variously used by the last tenant.

It was a great occasion to Mr. Evans' children, when, early one morning, a raw-boned white horse, with a long, narrow, covered waggon came driving along their road, filled with the various members and utensils of the French family. Mr. Evans, with the help of his children, had put the sugar-house into some kind of order, cleared away the old rubbish, and opened the large fire-place so that it could be used for cooking. Grace, of course, had brought in an abundance of wild flowers, and even Winny had contributed with her scrubbing-brushes to the improvement of the house. Mr. Brosseau had lived in many that were not as neat or cheerful, and the whole family were enthusiastic in their lively French way over everything, particularly Grace's flowers.

Louis, the eldest boy, about twelve, was a handsome child, with the dark hair, bright black eyes, and dark complexion, which belong to the Canadian French. He seemed to understand the whole process of moving

as much as if he had been born and brought up in the waggon, and ordered everybody and everything, not excluding his parents, in a way which was quite astonishing to the Evans' children, who stood looking on. He took up boxes which it seemed to Oscar a man could hardly lift, and tossed the baby when she came in his way out upon a bundle of straw as if she had been a kitten or a little puppy. During all this busy time he was continually making acquaintance with the children, by looking at them with his bright, shining eyes from over or under everything he lifted. He had such a winning, pleasant smile, too, that not to have smiled back would have been as good as impossible; so, before the moveables were carried into the house, he had established a kind of acquaintance with every one of them, and figured very largely in the lively accounts which they had to give to their father of the new settlers. The other three children were girls, none of them as handsome as Louis, but bright and nice-looking for those belonging to a French family.

Mr. Evans saw at once that he must have some rules to regulate the intercourse between the two families, or, thrown together as the children would almost necessarily be, they would become more intimate than would be at all proper or desirable. He therefore said, "There is one thing, my children, that I want to tell you, to begin with; I cannot allow you

to play with these French children. You will meet them very often when you are out together, and of course you will always be very kind to them, but I never expect to see or hear of your inviting them to your plays, or joining with them in theirs. I want this to be fully understood to start with. If you are strictly and carefully obedient you will save me a great deal of care, and I presume trouble, in the end."

Grace and Hope readily promised to do as their father wished, but Oscar hung his head; he had already planned many pleasant excursions with that merry-looking boy for his companion.

"Oscar!" said his father, noticing him, "do you understand me, and will you try to be faithful and true to me?"

"Yes, sir," said Oscar, doggedly; "but, papa, I don't see any harm in him, because he wears patched clothes, and is a French boy."

"Not any harm in these things, but the probability is, that he has not been educated so as to acquire very good habits in any way: these French emigrants are generally an industrious, but tricky set; they have little or no education, and very many of them no sense of morality whatever; I question whether Louis even goes to his own Catholic church twice a year: whether he makes any difference between the Sabbath and other days; whether he sees much distinction between truth

and falsehood: but no more. You understand now why I shall insist, Oscar, upon your not beginning an intimacy with this boy."

"You don't say a word to Norman," said Oscar, sullenly.

"To Norman! why, I should as soon think of saying a word to myself," said his father, with a look full of trust toward the boy; "Norman is almost a man."

"So am I," said Oscar, sitting up very straight in his chair.

"Well, see that you behave like one; then we all shall be very ready to believe it."

The children laughed, and Grace caught up her father's hat, put it on Oscar's head, and, making a very low bow, said, "How do you do, Grandpapa Evans?" with so much gravity and respect that even the rather ill-tempered face of the boy caught a smile, and the scene ended good-naturedly on his part; but Norman whispered a word or two of extra caution to him as, soon after, he passed him, showing Louis where to go and water the lean white horse that he called "Crantz." Crantz was a droll animal. Louis had taught him a great many tricks, and, tired and hungry as he was, he put him through several of them, very much to Oscar's amusement, while he was leading him to water. Oscar was too much taken up with this fun to mind what either his father or Norman had said to him, and there was little doubt he would have gone with Louis and

the horse to the stable, had not Hope seen him and ran out to call him away.

"Yes, I will come in a minute, Hope."

Hope stood still, waiting; the minute was a very long one, so she called again.

"What *do* you want?" said Oscar, fretfully.

"I want you; remember what father said."

"Father has gone down to the fields; he don't need me," said Oscar, evasively, still following Crantz.

Hope hesitated a moment, then ran quickly after him, and catching his hand, tried to pull him toward the house. But this was too much for Oscar's pride, he drew back and struck her; then Louis laughed and clapped his hands, saying some words in French which neither of the children, of course, understood. The language of the laugh, however, was intelligible, and Oscar, emboldened by it, struck again; but Hope, this time, was on her guard, and catching both of his hands, held them tightly, and, as she was the stronger, pulled him away. Louis did not laugh again; he saw it was in earnest, and not play, as he had at first thought, and, boy as he was, he had about him the native politeness so inherent to all classes of his nation, he would not vex or annoy the little, plain, Yankee girl. Oscar became quiet as soon as he was out of Louis' sight, and was very meek, while Hope reasoned with him. Hope had such an enticing way, it never was possible to be angry or rude to her, when they

were alone. Now, Oscar wanted to tell her he was sorry that he had struck her, but it was an awkward thing for a big boy to do, so Hope, taking it for granted that he was sorry, said for him,—

"You didn't mean to hurt me, did you, Oscar? you are sorry, I know, you struck your sister."

"Yes, but Crantz is such a funny horse; oh, Hope, you ought to see what odd tricks he does. Louis told him to give him his paw, and he took up his front leg, just like a dog, and put it into his hand. Then he told him to kiss him, and Crantz rubbed his nose right on his cheek. Louis said it was but the beginning of what he knew, that he was an old circus horse, and had learned these things years ago."

"I should think they would be very funny," said Hope, laughing. "We will ask Norman to go with us some time and see them all, if papa says we may."

"I can do as well as Norman."

"Yes, but Norman loves horses, and would like to see them as much as the rest of us; perhaps he can teach them to Kitty."

"Kitty can't begin," said Oscar, indignantly; "and I am going to watch Crantz till I find out how they are done."

"But you will ask papa first; remember what he said."

"Pooh! he didn't say I mustn't play with a horse,

only with a boy. Do be sensible, Hope, if you are a girl!"

"Well, only be particular, Oscar; don't forget how papa charged you to be faithful and true. What dear, good words those are!"

"I am tired to death of them; he has always been dinning them into me ever since I was born. I don't believe any other fellow ever was so bored."

"Oh, Oscar! Oscar! you know papa only does it for your benefit. How many times he has told you that to be these two things, was with God's blessing to be everything else that was good."

"Don't preach, Hope, for pity's sake."

"I don't mean to preach; but, Oscar—oh, dear, I am so afraid; I feel so troubled; you see it isn't an hour since papa talked to you, and here you have begun to be unfaithful already; you knew you ought not to be there with Louis, yet you did go and stayed."

"I only went to show him where the spring was; papa told me to be kind to him, and what would it have been if I had said, 'I wouldn't, he might find it for himself!' Answer me this, Miss Parson?"

"Well; but, Oscar, that wasn't stopping to talk; papa said, 'Associate with him'; you know as well as I do what that means. Do be faithful about it."

"You are nothing but a squeamish old maid. I wish you wouldn't be so fussy and particular; there is no living with you with the least comfort."

"I never knew you fly off and call me names," persisted Hope, "but when you were determined to have your own way; now, Oscar, don't forget, though none of us may see you, who does."

Oscar turned away, and began whistling with all his might. Pretty soon he heard his tune echoed. He listened, so did Hope; it was too clear and loud for a mountain echo, so Hope said,—

"It must be Louis imitating you."

Oscar changed his tune—the echo changed too, only where Oscar made a mistake in the tune the echo was perfectly correct.

Oscar was delighted, and proceeded from one tune to another, the echo still continuing until he had exhausted all he knew. Hope tried frequently to stop him; though this was not holding direct intercourse with Louis, it still was intercourse, and she could not make it seem quite right to her tender conscience.

"I would not, Oscar; be faithful in these little things; how pleasant it would be to tell papa that you obeyed him so exactly that you did not even whistle for fear it was not quite right."

"Stuff and nonsense, Hope; who ever heard anything so absurd in this world; why don't you take a fellow to task because the hills echo when he whistles among them? there would be as much sense in it, and more too I think."

"Dear Oscar, don't be vexed at me," and the tears

came into Hope's eyes; "but you see it don't seem true to me."

"Nothing ever does to such old maids," and Oscar thought when he had said this he had said something which was very smart, so he went away; but not without casting many half repentant looks over his shoulder to Hope, who as long as he could see her remained standing on the same spot.

"I wish," said Hope to Grace, who came at that moment out from the house, "I wish this French family had never come here."

"Why, I like their looks very well; and it is so pleasant to have somebody around beside one's own family; it don't seem half so much out of the world."

Hope then told Grace all about Crantz, and how Oscar had already disobeyed his father. Grace was sorry, but did not think he intended to do half as wrong as Hope feared. She could always comfort Hope, though stanch little thing as she was, she never altered her standard of right and wrong. She only became a little less fearful for the future, and went with more pleasure with Grace to carry to the travellers the supper which Winny had prepared for them in her own kitchen.

The migratory habits of the family made it very easy work for them to settle down. The children found the baby already asleep in its cradle; the rough bedstead hooked together in the corner, and neatly made up for the night; what few chairs and tables they had, com-

fortably disposed; and the crockery dishes placed in order for tea upon what used to be the old sugar boiler, but with the quick French contrivance, covered with a board, forming a permanent table very much out of the way. As they entered, the woman was busy fastening a white curtain up to the window; but she received them with much courtesy, thanked them warmly, and in her broken English invited them to stay and make her a visit.

Grace was quite disposed to comply, but Hope did not hesitate for a moment in simply doing her errand, and withdrawing as soon as the thanks ceased.

"I wanted to stay and see that queer little French girl, the one with that droll cap with a deep frill on; how very funny it was!" and Grace laughed merrily.

"So did I, only papa said we had better not."

"Oh, he didn't mean sitting down a moment in their house! That is only being kind."

"I don't know, I am not sure; better be safe."

"Oh, nonsense, I shall run in just when I have a fancy to."

"Better ask papa if you may."

"Don't be such a child, Hope. As if I was to ask papa for such a simple thing! He would laugh at me."

Hope shook her head, and wished more ardently than ever that the French family had not come.


V.—BEAR TRACKS.

V.

Bear Tracks.

BEAR tracks on the mountain, father! Norman! Bear tracks on the mountain!" shouted Oscar, running noisily into the room where the family sat dining. "A big fellow, too —a real bear."

"How came you to find them?" asked his father, lifting his hands to quiet the uproar which the intelligence aroused among the children.

"I saw them on the east hill, just over the cornfield, and Louis says they are bear tracks; he has seen them a hundred times before up there on the mountain, where he used to live."

"So, Oscar, you have been with Louis upon the east hill, have you," said his father gravely.

"I only went—I meant to go—I did not know—"

"Speak out like a man, have you or have you not been with Louis contrary to my commands?"

Oscar's eye wandered for a moment over the party, but it rested at last upon Hope. She had partly risen

from her chair, and was looking full in his face with a look the meaning of which was not for a moment to be misunderstood.

"Yes, father," he said, confusedly, "I went, but I meant to go only over to the dam where the old mill was. Louis said we would catch a fox if we went up a little higher."

"Go up to your room, Oscar, and stay there until I come to you." Oscar looked toward the table longingly, for in truth his mountain run had made him very hungry; but his father took no notice of his dumb application, and he went slowly and crossly away.

Hardly had the door closed upon him, when Norman said, "But the bear tracks, father; do you suppose they really did see any?"

"I haven't the least doubt of it. This part of the mountain is quite noted for a large black bear, not at all fierce, but mischievous and cunning."

"Will he eat little children?" broke in Maud.

"No, not unless they are asleep in his way; my little daughter need not have the slightest fear."

"I 'fraid he will," said Guy, climbing out of his high chair and into Norman's arms with much celerity.

"Nonsense! Guy is going to be a brave boy, and when he grows big he shall put on his powder-bag, take his gun, and go with me to shoot them," said Norman encouragingly. "What is to be done, father?"

"Oh, there is really nothing to be apprehended.

You can go with Oscar and see how near they are to the barns; we can't very well afford to lose any of our stock; when we know their vicinity we can judge better."

"What's vicinity?" said Maud, eagerly.

"Where they are, little goose," said Grace, laughing. "How splendid it is! Oh, Hope, only think of it, real live bears so close to us! it's just as good as Robinson Crusoe, if it isn't an island. I do hope we shall just get a peep at his black majesty."

"No, I don't want to. Go away, Grace, saying, peep at it."

"Hush, Guy, don't be cross. The bear won't hurt you or Grace either. I rather think if she should see his black majesty, as she calls him, coming, she would run as fast as any one."

"Perhaps I should, Mr. Norman, but I think you don't know how much courage there is in me yet."

"Nor ever shall till I see it tried," said Norman, with a sly wink. "I would rather bet on Birdie, however, than on you, if I were in the habit of betting."

Birdie looked up with a half-troubled smile; she could bear to hear Grace praised a great deal better than she could herself; it was so much less awkward. So she said, "Do you really believe, in truth and reality, there are bears here?"

"I know there are. The only question is, where they are, and how near they will venture toward a

settlement; but you girls had better be careful and not go far away from the house, because if there should be real tracks, there is no knowing when he may turn up."

Grace gave a little toss of defiance, which no one saw but Hope, and immediately laid her own plans; but as if her father had an intuitive knowledge of them as soon as formed, he said:—

"Yes, children, that will be the safest course. Until we are sure what this means, I should like to have you all very careful, and none of you go out of sight of the house for a few days, or until I give you leave. Hope, I know I can trust you; you will watch the others, will you?"

"Yes, sir," said Hope, meekly; "Maud and Guy don't go anywhere without me."

"All right, then. And, Norman, I will go up to Oscar; then you can take him, and let him show you where the tracks are. You had better take your gun; not that I think you will meet the animal, but there is never any harm in using proper precautions."

Mrs. Evans fortunately had left the table before Oscar had come home, so was in happy ignorance of what was going on, until Norman and Oscar were far on their way toward the bear tracks. Then it was too late to make her fears and anxieties of any avail; she had no one to worry but Winny, who, really pale from her terror as to what might happen to the children, and

to them all, should the bear be suddenly seen walking in at the front door, was in no condition to give her comfort. Grace had one of her favourite walks—every walk was her favourite—ready to tempt the others out, and by the middle of the long summer afternoon, the family were scattered in every direction.

Norman, led by Oscar, had no trouble in finding what Oscar had called the bear tracks, and being a boy of quick observation, he immediately saw that they were of a different form from any he had seen before. The spot was one too from which a bear might have been supposed to have issued. It was nearly at the foot of a high hill, whose sides were covered with an impenetrable jungle of bushes and scrub trees, the second growth after the cutting of the original forest. There were brown, bare rocks, with dark, mysterious-looking caverns hidden under them; old stumps, weird and fantastic, but grand retreats for an enraged, pursued animal; and leaping down somewhere in the depths of the mountain came a loud torrent, growling and grumbling like a bear at bay. Norman was a brave boy, but he saw and felt the situation they were in was not without its dangers, so he hurried back to tell his father what he had found.

Mr. Brosseau had heard the same thing from his son Louis; and as he was at work in the field with his father when Norman went to him, he said he had no doubt the boys were correct. He had heard before

moving to Glenburn that it was quite famous for its black bears, and for his part nothing should he like better than to get a snap at one; killing a bear was a grand day's work. It was accordingly arranged that he should go that night and reconnoitre, and if he felt sure that the animal was really near them, they should take the coming Saturday for a bear hunt, summoning as many of their neighbours, far and near, as they could to help them. Late that night Mr. Brosseau came to Mr. Evans' door to say, there was no doubt of the bear being there, as he had tracked it to a hole under two overhanging rocks. He rather imagined from appearances that it was a female with young. If so, they should have a hard time, for mother bears were savage and blood-thirsty in defence of their cubs.

Mr. Brosseau had many wonderful bear stories to tell Mr. Evans, as they stood together at the back door, to all of which the children listened with very open eyes and ears, and Maud and Guy with no little real terror.

Oscar drew near to Mr. Brosseau, and stood looking eagerly up in his face as he talked; not a word escaped him, and long after the other children were asleep, he lay awake making his plans.

Louis Brosseau combined in his capacity of bragging, the threefold powers of Yankee, Frenchman, and boy. He was twelve years old, bold, athletic, sunny-tempered, joyous, and merry. Nor was he with all these pleasant

traits a very bad boy. I mean he had not the vices so common to the immigrant children, of lying, stealing, and using profane words. His father had enforced strict honesty as a matter of policy, being shrewd enough to know he could never find work for himself if he brought in his train a thieving, mischievous boy. For telling the truth, Louis had seldom any necessity, as some boys would think, of telling a falsehood, for he was allowed to do as he pleased from morning to night, seldom being questioned by any one as to where he had been, or how engaged through a single hour of the twenty-four; only, so as he kept out of mischief, by which his father understood making him trouble, it was all he asked. Fortunately for Louis, living as he did on the top of the mountain, he was free from the temptations which beset idle boys in towns or villages; he had often in his solitary home no playmates but the wild animals in the woods, and his father's horse Crantz, his sisters being too small to be his companions, and being "only girls." So Louis had grown up a true mountain boy; no hunter was quicker or surer in setting traps, tracking the smaller wild animals, such as partridges, woodchucks, rabbits, and squirrels; no one brought home a larger or finer string of trout; and as for the berries, it was a happy time enough for his little sisters when berries came; for go where or when he would, Louis never forgot to bring them their basketful of fruit. He had, of course, very many

stories to tell Oscar, of the great things that had been, and should be, but particularly grand had he been on the subject of bear-taking, so it is no wonder that Oscar lies awake to-night and plans, or that Louis figures largely in his plan, for Oscar is but eight, and what is fresh from the land of wonders, is only a part of all his child-world.

The next morning, obedient to her father's request, Hope does not allow herself to lose sight of Oscar, for any long time; and as she quietly watches him, it becomes very evident to her that he is trying to evade her. At last, her mother calls her, she is unusually sick and fretful to-day, and one thing is needed after another until Hope forgets all about Oscar, who, finding himself free, runs immediately away. When Hope returns, Oscar is nowhere to be found. Grace has not seen him; neither has Maud or Guy. Hope goes to the French house, but Louis had gone; and with a troubled feeling, that in obeying one parent she had to disobey another, Hope has to give him up, and wait patiently for his reappearance. This, fortunately for her, she does not have to do long, for she cannot enjoy a thing while he is away. How she has wronged him. There is Louis leading Crantz in from the field where he has been ploughing with him, and at the same time there is Oscar returning in an opposite direction with a large armful of blueberry bushes. Hope runs out to meet him, welcoming him with a gentle tenderness, as

if she were asking him to forgive her her suspicions. And now Hope becomes much less vigilant; indeed, she scarcely notices that Oscar is gone in the afternoon much longer than he was in the morning, not coming home this time with blueberry bushes, but with very red cheeks, and looking, as Winny said when she saw him, "all beat out." Winny is very indulgent to the children. She will not have any of the "poor dears" within doors such fine weather, it will be hard enough on them when the winter comes, with the snow six feet deep, so that they have to go in and out of the chimney-top, they shall be in the sunshine and pick flowers while they can! She takes all domestic care upon herself; what if she never worked so hard, no, nor half so hard before in her life! it is not as bad as those lonely days she spent after they all left Castleford. She had rather work her fingers to the bone than go through that again; and so she scolds and pets and works, and is very happy if only the little folks are happy too. Mr. Evans says at night, as he bids Hope good-night, "I see my little daughter has been faithful to her trust to-day, and kept the children all at home; watch them well, Hope, for a few days, then we will have everything safe again."

And Hope tells her father how Oscar was away, but only for blueberries, and a little while in the afternoon, and that Grace had gone too, but Maud and Guy had never left her for the whole day.

Then her father pats her cheek very fondly, and says he does not know what he should do without his Hope; so she leaves him with a very bright, happy spot in her heart.

It was now Thursday; in two days more the bear-hunt was to come off; of course the boys could talk or think of very little else, and the girls were almost as much interested. A real bear-hunt! They had many dangers to imagine, many escapes to plan out, and were in truth not free from all fear until they found they could clamber up on to the highest shelf of the clothes closet at the head of the chamber stairs; there, they were sure, the bear could never find them, or reach them, if by any luck he should come.

Thursday afternoon, soon after dinner, Hope missed Oscar; again a search, but with no success. Hope was restless and uneasy, but not as much so as she had been when he had disappeared on the first day of her trust. Grace had gone too. It was not natural to Hope to suspect any one, but she could not help thinking Grace must have helped Oscar; at any rate, Grace had not given her the slightest intimation, very contrary to her usual custom, of her own plans. Hope tried to play with the little children, and not think that Grace had been unkind to her, but it was of no use, every half hour that passed only made her the more restless and uneasy. She could not tell her mother, for after all what was there to tell, but that

Grace and Oscar had gone, an occurrence of every day, before the bear had made his appearance, and beside, telling her mother generally proved anything but a relief from trouble. Winny—but Winny always worried so, and what good could she do now? so Hope, with her strong, brave heart, determined to keep as quiet, and be as watchful as she could.

The long afternoon wore very slowly away. Would it never be time for her father and Norman to come home? Where were Grace and Oscar? How long the shadows grew on the mountain sides; how still it was! So Hope, in spite of her endeavours to keep silent, began to talk to herself, and to wish, wish; it seemed to her as if she did nothing but wish, and start at every sound she heard. At last she saw her father and Norman coming very slowly home across the field; she ran eagerly to meet them, and Norman no sooner met her than he read at once some tale of trouble; so he said, cheerfully,—

"What now, little Birdie, which fledgling has flown away from the nest?"

"Grace and Oscar," said Hope, answering him literally.

"Grace and Oscar. Gone away; have been gone all the afternoon most; oh, dear! I don't know how long it is," and poor little Hope, wearied out by her long and anxious watching, burst into a good, hearty cry.

"Well, what do you cry for?" asked Norman, soothingly! "you haven't been?"

"No; but—but, papa, I couldn't help it. I did not think Grace would go. I did not watch her, or Oscar so much as I might, because he hasn't been before to stay—"

Mr. Evans made a few anxious inquiries; then they all quickened their steps, with the hope of finding the children safely back when they should reach the house. But they were not there, and although not late, it was too late for them to be away from home with such dangerous neighbours at large near them. Mr. Evans was very weary from his hard day's work. If Grace could have seen the look of trouble which came over his pale, tired face, when, instead of sitting down to his refreshing tea, he turned away to go in search of her, she might have learned a life-long lesson of obedience.

VI.—THE BEAR HUNT.

VI.

The Bear-Hunt.

ON the first afternoon when Hope missed Oscar, if she could have followed him, she would have seen him, instead of going blueberrying as she thought, steal away to a sheltered spot behind Mr. Brosseau's house, where he had already established a custom of going and whistling for Louis when he wished to see him. Louis was in a field near by, breaking down the berry bushes to carry home; and as he loved the society of boys, even if they were younger, better than any kind of sport by himself, he came immediately; he was not, however, a little surprised and amused when Oscar proposed to him that they, two, should go and kill the bear, and take to themselves the bounty money which the State paid for the deed, beside all the glory. Louis need not have been so much astonished as he really was, for in his wonderful stories he had often appropriated quite as great a share in the exploit as killing the bear would have

been, and Oscar, it must be remembered, implicitly believed him.

Louis laughed a loud, merry laugh at first, but seeing this disconcerted Oscar, he immediately put a sober face upon the matter, and said,—

"It wouldn't be nothing terrible for me, Oscar, but what does sich a fellar' as you 'spect to do? why the bear would eat you up at half a mouthful!"

"I'd climb up a tree," said Oscar, innocently.

"And leave me to fight it out. Well, after all that ain't so bad, 'cause if he should take to eatin' me, why you would be there to do the holloring, and somebody might come in time to save my head, it wouldn't matter so much if the rest of me was eat up; the head is the best part of a man anyhow, you know. Come on, old fellar, that is worth the thinking of at any rate."

So down the boys sat, hidden by the low, hanging branches, and carried out the plans with many additions and amendments which Oscar had been so busy making the night before.

"Hope won't let me, if she knows it," said Oscar, trembling with the fear of having so much sport broken up, when all was planned.

"Hope! she's the homely one, been't she," said Louis; "never you mind her, t'other one will; the pretty girl; Grace, you call her."

"Yes, indeed! Grace is up to anything. I only wish

she was a boy, I should like her a great deal better than I do Norman, anyhow."

A girl that was "up to anything" was a new being in Louis's world. He had been struck by Grace's pretty face, and her winning, pleasant way. She was like the coarse picture to him of the Madonna, that his mother prized so much, and always hung up first in every home to which they went. He could not keep from going around Mr. Evans' house often in hopes of seeing her; and when he did, for some unaccountable reason, he felt happy a long time after. Now he seized eagerly upon Oscar's suggestion, that she "could do anything," and proposed, as three would be safer than two, in case of an accident, that she should be invited to go with them; but this was what Oscar hardly liked; he made many objections, all of which seemed to increase Louis's wish for her company; and at last he positively refused to do anything about the bear, unless she made one of the company. Oscar was fast learning to be cunning; he proposed, in parting, that they should go home, he with the bushes, and Louis leading Crantz, who was feeding near by with his harness on, promising if he could entirely blind Hope, so as to escape her vigilance, to bear with the company of Grace rather than not go at all. And now for the next few days Louis went to work with a great deal of interest to have a good time even if they did not kill the bear.

Grace at first treated the proposal with the utmost indifference; indeed, better than that, she tried to persuade Oscar to give up all idea of it, threatening, if he did not, to tell her father; but by degrees she began to think it would be pleasant to see the fun; her spirit of adventure became gradually awakened, and by Thursday no one was more eager to go than herself. Did Grace not remember her father's command, and that she was not only going to disobey him, but would incur the double guilt of aiding and abetting her little brother in doing what was so wrong? Grace was, as we know, an impulsive child, and now, after the first few twinges of conscience, she gave herself up to the anticipations, and stifled any thought or feeling of doubt which suggested itself. She, with Oscar, felt the necessity of eluding Hope's vigilance, and did so, as we have seen, most successfully, until too late to be kept at home.

Grace had no idea of being gone for more than an hour or two; we must do her the justice to say, that had she in the least anticipated what really took place no inducement would have tempted her to have gone. For Oscar, he was too young to reflect much on what might happen. There was no time to him but the present, and no enjoyment but what could be procured at that very passing moment. He was selfish, too, of course he was; those of my readers who remember how he allowed Hope to carry the water, which belonged

to him to carry, will not need to be told of that. "Straws show which way the wind blows." So the actions are often very, very small which show the traits of a child, but they tell true tales, often much truer than those with which a fond parent characterizes this same child. It was just after dinner on this Thursday, that Grace, stealing out by the back door, went quickly down the lane that led to the path in the woods. Oscar followed soon, though by another route, keeping along under the high garden fence until he was entirely out of Hope's sight. Then he ran as nimbly as a squirrel toward the place where Grace and Louis were already waiting him.

How like a true bear-hunter that Oscar had read about in his books Louis looked! He had on a cap with a red band, and without a visor, pushed back off from his handsome face; a red flannel bag, his game bag, strung over one shoulder, and his gun, a small fowling piece which his father allowed him to call his own and use as he pleased, over the other. Oscar wished he was big enough to carry a gun, but as it was he was obliged to content himself with begging to carry the pouch of shot, which hung from a leather belt that was buckled around Louis's waist. Louis good-naturedly took off the belt and put it on Oscar, who never during the whole adventure thought it heavy, or allowed himself to feel that he was troubled by the unusual belt which girded in his small blouse.

He followed close behind Louis, not willing that Grace, who was really much more nimble and strong than he was, should pass him in the narrow paths, or help him to scramble up the steep rocks, which lay in their way, and which the incumbrance of his belt made it often very difficult for him to surmount without aid.

Very soon they had passed all familiar places; and Louis struck into what seemed to them the very depth of the forest. Such a strange, tangled place as it was, not a vestige of a path. Now they stepped upon what appeared a level bit of green, and found it tangled roots and brambles, which went down, down with them often quite to Oscar's alarm; and now they climbed a steep, smooth rock, catching hold of little twigs to pull themselves up, and felt them yield with that peculiarly uncomfortable sensation of giving way. Nothing seemed impossible to Louis. Grace sometimes wondered if he did not go right through the bodies of the trees, he came out on the other side so easily; and all the time he was leading them up the mountain.

After walking in this way a short distance, Grace's clothes became torn, catching, it seemed to her, on every branch which the trees held toward her. She saw one rent appear after another, until Louis, with a peculiar shrug of his shoulders, called her a "tin lady." This, after thinking over some time, she made out to mean that she was so ragged she only looked fit to be sold to one of the tin peddlers who frequented the

region. How she wished she was a boy without the incumbrance of dresses. It was nothing for Louis and Oscar to go bear-hunting, but "these everlasting dresses,"—what would her mother and Winny say?—and who should mend them? This latter reflection was a very sober one to Grace; for like most active girls, she especially disliked her needle, and no task was so bad as the one of mending. But it was too late now, the mischief was done, and she might as well have all the pleasure she could. Louis laughed at every fall they received, at every misfortune that happened to them. This was good fun at first, but as they both became tired, the laugh did not sound quite so merry; still, this made no difference to Louis, excepting to add a little zest. At length they came to a brook which was to be crossed. An old trunk of a tree, thrown across what appeared to be the deepest part, was the only bridge. Over this, without stopping for a moment, or looking behind to see if they were following, Louis passed. So far, though often annoyed, yet neither Grace nor Oscar had made any complaints. They had tried to make the best of everything, though it was hard work for Oscar, who often lingered a moment to wipe away the tears which would come after a hard fall had left him smarting with pain; but this tree was round and covered with a green, slimy moss; Grace went very boldly on to it at first, but how white the water was just above her, and how still

and dark it became just below! She stopped, and tried to hold on to a tree which bent very near; but no, it was a little beyond her grasp. They could not turn to go back; she could not go a step forward, what should she do? Grace was no coward, but it must be confessed she felt exceedingly uncomfortable. Just at this juncture, Louis looked around. "Come on," he said, "what on earth are you standing there for?"

"I don't dare to," said Grace, timidly.

Louis laughed. "Oh, if he would do anything but laugh," thought Grace; then he said, "Step right ahead, follow your nose."

"I can't. I shall fall."

"Why, you have your shoes on; they don't stick like bare feet, do they? but get up a little higher there, it don't slant down so much; now stick on, count three, and over with you."

"Stick on, count three, and, and"—Grace repeated these talismanic words several times; but the three last—*over with you*—were very different affairs; though precisely what she wanted, they would not come. She tottered on a step or two more, but with such an obvious want of balance that Louis called to her to "Hold on!" while he came for her. Could she do it? how everything danced around; the great green tree seemed to be jumping up and down, the water was going so fast; Grace uttered a little scream, she felt

she was falling, at that moment a hand caught hers. "Come ahead? that's it, now hold on tight." Grace tried to, but how slippery it was! She knew her feet were off the log, something held her for a moment, and then she and Louis were in the water together. A loud laugh, very merry indeed, came to her almost as soon as the sensation of being wet, and she found they had fallen, but so near the bank that it was only a step or two, and they were on land. Her shoes and stockings were filled with water, but what did that matter; she laughed as loudly and merrily as Louis, who watched her wring her stockings and shoes with his whole face sparking with glee.

"Got a ducking; why didn't you bring up a trout, eh! Proper big down there. I caught a fellow so long once—measuring nearly a foot with his hands—sitting there right in the middle of that very log. Great fun that, I tell you."

Oscar, taking advantage of the example of bare feet, took off his shoes and stockings, and sitting down astride the log, managed to slip himself over without anything more than pale cheeks, and a great desire not to have to repeat the experiment.

Louis assured them that the bear's lair was very near, and as he saw no tracks he felt pretty sure the animal was safe in its den, so that all he should have to do was to build up a great fire at its entrance so as to prevent it coming out, and as soon as it began to

growl and show itself he should go right up to the mouth, put his gun in, fire, and as he never missed his aim, the bear would fall dead in a minute, and all he should do then would be to cut off its ears, to show he had really killed it, and of course he should get the bounty money the very next day. The children had perfect confidence in him, and though they began to feel quite tired, they gathered up fresh courage and kept on. "We will stop, catch some trout, make up a fire, and broil them first," said Louis, as he came to a very tempting-looking trout brook.

"Splendid!" said Grace, whose appetite was very keen just then. "You catch them, Louis, and Oscar and I will have the fire all ready."

"What shall we light it with, and where is the grid-iron?" said Oscar, with a timid look into the dark woods overhead. It was strange how fast his courage went, the nearer they came to the den.

"What a stupid you are!" said Louis. "You just get the dry wood together. Here are a bunch of matches, I brought them on purpose. I'll take care of the rest. If I haven't had more than one feast this way, then I don't know beans when the bag is opened."

Louis quickly disappeared, by the side of the stream, and Grace and Oscar began to collect the dry and dead branches which were scattered thickly around them. Pretty soon they had a great pile; they could not need any more; so they sat down to wait Louis'

return. How strange it seemed, then, no sound but the brook dashing over the stones, and the wind against the trees, how it howled! Did it sound like a bear? "There! what *was* that?" Poor little Oscar, he jumped so many times, and kept asking this question over and over so often, that at last Grace became very impatient with him, and gave him what she called "a good round scolding." This, of course, only made Oscar the more timid, and the more ready to see and hear everything. Grace, to amuse him, after she found her scolding did no good, kindled the fire, and for a time both children forgot everything else in the novel sight. The dry branches blazed and crackled, sending up whole galaxies of stars, which rose and hid themselves among the green leaves, like frolicksome children at play. Then they would disappear, and fresh wood curl up in long spiral columns of smoke, which seemed hunting after the sparks, though it never found them. Then the children shouted, piling on more wood, dead leaves, dried fern, anything that would burn fast and bright. So intent were they upon this new pleasure that they forgot to notice the length of Louis' absence, and that it was already growing dark in the woods. They were not at all weary of their sport when they heard Louis calling out in a frightened voice:—

"Halloo there! what are you about? You've set the woods on fire!"

Oscar dropped the large limb he was dragging with all his strength toward the fire, and stood aghast; while Grace, too frightened to speak, gazed above her at the wreaths of dark smoke which were puffing out from distant trees, with an undeniable conviction that Louis was right. Louis too seemed struck dumb after the first moment with terror. He threw his string of trout upon the ground and began dragging the fire apart, seizing the unburnt ends of the burning wood for that purpose, and hurling them in every direction, without noticing that he was only increasing the mischief. Neither Grace nor Oscar offered to assist him; but when it was done, and nothing remained but a great heap of smouldering ashes and coals, he said, angrily,—

"What do you stand staring so for, without doing nothing, can't you bring some water from the brook? I should think it was mischief enough to wake you up."

Both of the children started for the brook, and did not think until they had reached the bank that they had nothing to carry the water in. Oscar had an indefinite idea that he could take his hands full, and made the attempt, but, of course, before he had taken many steps, there was nothing left but some wet trembling fingers.

"We haven't anything to bring it in," shouted Grace; these were the first words she had spoken, and her voice had a strange sound to her.

"Big fools! can't you do nothing?" and Louis was quickly at their side. Dipping his cap into the water, he ran swiftly, and succeeded in carrying enough to produce a slight effect. Oscar imitated him with very good success, and Grace attempted to make her sunbonnet answer, but to little purpose, the material of which it was made was so thin that the water soon ran out, and indeed the whole attempt was useless, as Louis soon saw.

"What did you do it for?" he asked as he paused a moment, as red and as hot as the fire itself.

"We did not know as there was any harm; we never thought we could set woods on fire," stammered Grace.

"So much bigger fools. Now, you see the whole town will be out down in Knolton, and Brandon and Emsbury, and Centretown, and Bridgely and Towers, and Shawmut and all; and they will catch you and hang you both, as true as you are alive. Don't you know it's hanging for setting fire,—*arson* they call it when they send you to jail, and arson means like murder; got to be hung for it."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear!" broke out Oscar in such a wild, frightened scream, that it startled Louis. "I don't want to be hung. Come, Grace, let's run home to father just as quick as we can. Come, come, oh, come!"

"Don't be a fool," said Grace, in a very collected

voice. "Louis Brosseau, you ought to be ashamed to frighten Oscar so; you know as well as I do that it's no such thing, it's only state prison for life if you set fire to buildings, because human life is in danger; I heard father and Norman talking about it not a week ago, when some incendiary was taken, away up here, in these Green Mountains; I should just like to know what harm is done; I don't believe a word you say; I don't think the woods are on fire;" and Louis pointed to the increasing smoke, and just at that moment a bright blaze broke out from a tree-top not far distant. "What is that?" he asked.

"Well, it's fire!" said Grace, trying to regain the calm voice in which she had been speaking, when he interrupted her. "But if it is, it's only in the woods, and that is of just no consequence at all."

"My gracious, see how it goes!" and Louis caught hold of Grace's arms in his eagerness, and drew her back a little to where she could have a better view of it.

It had caught the dryest branches of a large dead pine-tree, and if the whole had been covered with a burning fluid it could not have spread more rapidly or brilliantly. The pitchy nature of the tree made the blaze very bright, and in an incredibly short time it was wrapped from top to bottom in one wreath of flame. The children stood looking at it as if rivetted to the spot. At a short distance was another dead

tree of the same kind. Grace saw with unspeakable terror the little fork of flame spring from the topmost cones as she had from the top of the one now nearly level with the ground.

"We shall be burnt to death," said Louis at last, "if we don't go. Why, how dark it is, look in there."

The brightness of the fire casting everything around itself into darkness, gave the surrounding woods the appearance of midnight where its light ceased to penetrate.

"I am afraid," said Louis, turning pale, and shrinking back as Grace endeavoured to lead him forward. "There's bears and wolves, and all kinds of creatures in there after dark; I had rather stay here."

"But we shall be burnt up alive here," answered Grace, with a shudder. Oscar again gave one of his dismal cries, but the only comfort he got now was a rough shake by the shoulder.

"Keep still, can't you; don't you know the bears hear children's voices after dark, and come running at them as tight as they can?"

Oscar shivered and kept close to Grace, who put her arm protectingly around him; the care of him was an instinct which never seemed to forsake her. "Don't be afraid," she said, "the bears never eat good little boys, it's only the wicked ones; don't you remember about them in the Bible?"

"Good little boys and the Bible." Had Oscar been

so good a boy, that the Bible could be any comfort to him now? The bright fire all around him; the dark woods so full of dreadful things between him and home; did he have the feeling that God would be near him, and take care of him, and bring him through these dangers in safety? Oscar did not think very definitely, frightened as he was about these things now, but he did afterwards; indeed, he will never forget that night.

"I am going home," said Grace resolutely, after a few minute's silence. "Come, Oscar, keep tight hold of my hand; if we hear anything coming we can hide or climb up into the trees. Louis, you know the way, you go first, we will keep close to you."

"I don't know the way," said Louis, looking around him very much bewildered. "I never was here in the dark before."

"Well, then, I shall find it, follow me; and let us sing, if we can, it will frighten away the bears." So Grace broke out into a loud, sweet song, which, if it had no effect on the bears, certainly had upon Louis, for he followed her only a few steps behind, then turning abruptly in another direction from that in which she was going, said, "I see, come, this is the way.' What he saw, Louis could never tell, but it was a landmark upon which the light had glanced for a moment.

[illegible] children, in perfect silence, for Grace's song was

soon ended, walked quickly on toward that part of the woods from which the sound of falling water came. Many hard falls they all received, but, excepting now and then a sharp cry of pain from Oscar, not a complaint was made. Already the fire-light was lost behind them, there was nothing but the dim twilight and the air heavy with the increasing smoke. For a short time Louis walked bravely along as if he knew where he was, but he began to stop oftener and oftener; and at last he threw himself upon the ground, said "the stream ran up to the top of the mountain instead of down, and they should never get home alive."

"Shame on you for a coward," said Grace, whose courage rose as she felt how much more the little hand she held trembled. "I am going to shout! Father and Norman are home long ago from their work, and will come out to find us when it comes tea-time and we are not there; and Hope, too, I dare say she is within a stòne's throw now. "Come, Oscar, let us call her. Hope! Hope!"

"Hope! Hope!" shouted the eager voice of the boy by her side. "Oh, Hope, Hope, where are you, Hope?"

"Once more, louder still;" and again the children shouted out the dear name in the still night air. The bats and the ravens took it up and answered, and the great grey rocks sent Hope's name back with such a dismal sound.

"What is that," said Louis, suddenly holding Grace tight. "It's the bear, I know it is; hear it, hear it."

"Nonsense, Louis, it's only the wind;" but Grace's teeth chattered together with fear as she said so, for unmistakeably there was a strange new sound they had not heard before. "Here is a big tree, let us hide behind it," she said; "if it is the bear he will go right by."

The three children huddled closely together behind the tree, and listened with painful acuteness. The sound was distant, and to their great relief it did not come nearer, still they dared not move; they hardly dared to breathe. Louis was the first to recognise what it really was. Springing suddenly up, and swinging around his wet cap, he shouted, "It's the horn, it's the horn!"


VII.—FIRE ON THE MOUNTAINS.

VII.

Fire on the Mountains.

WITHOUT waiting to take any refreshment Mr. Evans and Norman hurried through the task which remained for them at home, and as the twilight had quite advanced and neither Grace nor Oscar had made their appearance, Mr. Brosseau was called, and a consultation held as to what had better be done. At first the trouble which Mr. Evans seemed to feel amused Mr. Brosseau. He could hardly believe it real, and it was not until he told him that they must start immediately on the search, that he began to show any real interest in the matter. Going to his own house, to see what his wife knew of Louis's movements, he found the fowling-piece and hunting accoutrements, even the trout line, gone, so he had little doubt when he returned to Mr. Evans, that the three children had gone off together on an expedition to the mountains. He was very much amused when Mr. Evans spoke of the danger to which they were exposed

from the bear. He had always allowed Louis to go and come as he pleased, and would not have felt half as anxious as Mr. Evans did now had he stayed out over night. He was, however, a good-natured man, and desirous to please his employer; so he was soon ready to start in the search, arming himself with nothing but the large tin horn, with which he had been accustomed to summon Louis from the woods, whenever he had any need of him. They took the direction in which the children had gone, Mr. Brosseau having often heard Louis describe it, as leading to fine trout brooks; and they had not gone far before they saw the smoke curling up from a spot in the mountain not very far distant.

Mr. Brosseau's practised eye soon told him what it was, and the probable cause; this Mr. Evans could readily understand, though not the amount of mischief which, in that season of the year, Mr. Brosseau seemed to fear might be done. Taking the smoke for a guide, they went directly toward it, with as little delay as possible, Mr. Brosseau constantly blowing the horn. It was this which Louis heard and recognised; the trouble now was to meet the party whom the children knew must be out in search of them.

They all shouted in answer, but, of course, their voices were not loud or strong enough to be heard at any distance, and their hopes were beginning to give way to fears, particularly as the darkness in the woods seemed to increase very rapidly, when the horn sounded once

more only a short distance below them, and Louis's shrill imitation of a crow was answered by a call of the same kind from his father. The two kept up the sounds without much cessation, until the children began to hear the crackling of the branches of the forest trees, as they broke their way through. Grace and Oscar uttered loud screams of joy, and, forgetting all their fatigue, rushed through the thick woods, tumbling over rocks, and down into holes, until Grace landed upon a hard bed of rock. At any other time she would have considered herself too much hurt to move or do anything but groan, but now she tried to get up; and holding her hands out towards her father, her first words were,—

"Father, I am so sorry."

Mr. Evans was too glad to find his children safe, to have any other feeling than one of joy; he lifted Grace up, kissed her fondly, but as he attempted to put her on her feet, she fell back, and screamed with pain.

She had sprained her ankle so as to be unable to bear any weight upon it. She tried heroically several times to step, but it only made her feel faint and sick, so that she was obliged to lie down, all the time suppressing her tears with the utmost difficulty.

What was to be done? They were a mile from home, and the path was rugged and difficnlt. Grace was too big to be carried in any one's arms. No horse could be brought for her, and to prepare a litter would take

both time and materials which were not at their command. But Mr. Brosseau was quick in expedients; he cut two small beech trees, little more than saplings, tied them together with supple twigs, and Grace was carefully lifted upon them, the coats of the men serving to make a bed. She tried not to groan or scream, but the pain in her ankle seemed to spread all over her. Raising her hand even hurt her; and so very pale and death-like did she look, that as her father saw her, he feared the injury had been much greater than he had anticipated.

"O father, father!" she sobbed out, "I will try to be good and brave, and bear it. I deserve it all, I know I do. Hope, Hope."

"I am very sorry for you, darling," her father said, tenderly, "we will carry you as easily as we can; but you will have to suffer a great deal before we can reach home."

"If I were only Hope! She never wants to come, dear little Hope!" Grace's voice was so touching as she said these last words, that Norman, in spite of the vexation which he had felt toward the children, and which had kept him from sympathizing as he otherwise would have in Grace's accident, felt his anger melt away, and he arranged the head of the suffering child as tenderly as he would if it had been under other circumstances. Grace, however, did not notice or thank him, as Hope would have done. She seemed wholly

occupied in regretting her fault, bearing the pain, and longing for Hope. In the meantime, Oscar had clung to his father, without speaking, holding fast to his hand when he could find one, and when he could not, contenting himself with grasping some part of his clothes. Mr. Evans only once noticed him, then it was to put his hand in the boy's hand, and say sadly, "I am very sorry my son has disobeyed his father." Oscar answered by a sob, and clung the closer.

In spite of all the care they could take in removing her, Grace suffered more pain during the time than she had all her life long before. Her ankle swelled quickly and became stiff and immovable. She was hardly conscious when she left the woods, or when in the twilight they crossed the fields and entered the lane leading to their house; the first impression she could recall afterwards was of hearing Hope's voice, as she stood holding open the gate for them to pass in.

Norman had thoughtfully gone on before, and told the family at home what had happened, making it as light as possible for fear of alarming his mother; so now everything was in readiness. Winny had wheeled the sofa near the door of the dining-room. Hope brought the pillows, and her mother, as pale as Grace herself, and almost as helpless, was running to and fro from the outer door to her own room, wringing her hands and weeping aloud, when Grace was brought in.

Winny gave one exclamation of alarm when she saw

how quickly a few hours' pain had changed the child, then quietly lifted her from the little rough litter, and placed her on the sofa as if she were still only a baby. Hope stood by trembling; she did not dare to speak, she did not dare to move. It was not until her father said: "Hope, give Oscar his supper and see that he goes at once to bed," that she began to realize there was something for her to do. Hope had spent a very miserable afternoon, and the last two hours had been to her those of such anxiety as a child seldom knows. Good child that she was, she was more disposed to blame herself for some oversight which had allowed Grace and Oscar to go away, than them for going; and now she had such a repentant, heavy feeling about her heart, as if she were the occasion of every groan which came from Grace. Her father had sent her away, hoping to divert her while Grace was undressed and the ankle bathed; but he might have spared himself the trouble, for it hardly seemed to him that she had gone before she was back, and when Grace became fully conscious that she was there it was impossible to separate them again.

After Grace had been made as comfortable as possible, Winny, whose kind feelings never prevented her doing what she called "spressing her mind," brought in a very nice supper for her, and as she placed it before her, and lifted her gently so that she could eat it if she wished, she said,—

"This 'ere all comes of your always taking your own

way, Grace, I always told you how it would be; no gal was ever made to go a clambering around on the top of rocks and mountains without getting their neck broke. It ain't their natur' and there ain't no use. If God had wanted you to be a boy, he would have made you one, and be done with it; but since he ain't, it's all just throwing it away. There's Hope, now, did you ever hear of her tumbling about, and getting laid up, so that folks that have got more to do than they can find time for any way, have got to stop, and go to taking care of her. No, I tell ye, it ain't the right way, but if this don't sarve your turn and save ye, nothing ever will."

"Winny," said Grace, opening her large blue eyes, and fixing them steadily on her, "it is not tumbling down that's any matter, you know it is not, and so you needn't scold me for that, but it's disobeying and running away."

"Why, only hear this child, as if it was a mortal sin to be a going out to pick posies on that 'ere Green Mountain; disobeying, why, you lamb, your father hasn't set no orders up agin that; it's all agin tumbling and hurting you; and as for running away, if a child that han't got nothing else to play with can't go after the squirrels, I don't know what the mortal man she can do. Here, Pinky, eat your supper; them's proper nice tea cakes; and here's the berries that Hope sugared for you on'y jist two hours ago."

Grace tried to swallow a few mouthfuls, but could not, and this touched Winny sooner than any other appeal to her sympathies.

"Sit up on eend, and take it slow, my lamb." Winny's great arms lifted her; but Grace only put her head on her shoulder, and burst into a loud passionate cry,—

"Don't be kind to me, Winny, don't, don't. I never shall be good, never shall be faithful and true as Hope is, as long as I live. I—"

"Hope's Hope, and Gracy is Gracy," said Winny, soothingly. "I can't spare her, nohow, nor I can't spare you, and so the matter's settled, and now you may jist stop that crying, and lie down and behave like a woman, and if you have done wrong, why pray to the blessed Jesus to forgive you; that's what he came for; jist such naughty girls as you say you are, and I daresay you're right, can come to him and make it all up, when they are sorry; so we won't worry no more, but go to sleep, and I'll go and wash my dishes, and strain my milk that's been a waiting these two hours."

Winny shut the door softly behind her; and when Grace again opened her eyes her mother was standing in her place by her bedside.

Mrs. Evans was by no means without a mother's love and care for her children, but her long invalid life had made her so selfish, that, without being conscious of it, everything presented itself in a personal light. She was very much grieved and anxious over Grace's

accident; but so annoyed by her disobedience, and the care which her sickness must bring to herself, that she said, fretfully,—

"I never saw anything like it; it has been nothing but a series of misfortunes ever since we came to this place; there was Hope, she must fall down the cellar stairs, at the risk of being killed; and as for the other children, they have done nothing but tear their clothes and hurt themselves ever since we left Castleford; and now here you have been away and got a sprain that I dare say will make you lame for life. I should like to know what you children think is to become of me. I am almost crazy with such a succession of misfortunes."

Grace shut her eyes and turned her head away, with a motion of petulance very like her mother's, if either of them had recognised it, and did not answer.

Hope looked with much distress from one to the other; at last she said: "Dear mother, Grace will never do so again; do forgive her now."

"Yes, that is just the way, always promising for the next time, but that next time never comes, nor ever will, until I am laid in my grave; that won't be long at this rate, that is pretty certain," and Mrs. Evans shed a few hot tears at her own prospective decease. These touched Grace, and she said: "Don't worry, mother; you would be sorry for instead of scolding me, if you only knew how my limb aches. It seems as if I couldn't bear it any longer. Do go and keep the chil-

dren still; Guy's screaming goes through and through my head."

Mrs. Evans obeyed in a helpless way; but Guy's screaming was anything but stilled at her coming. It was not until a voice, half scolding, and half fretting, and making more noise than Guy himself, was heard, that the child became still. Hope would even then hear him sobbing for her, and saying, "he was 'fraid the great black bear was coming to eat him up."

"Everybody calls for you, Hope, when they are in trouble," said Grace, "no one ever for me. It shows, and it shows what is true too—faithful and true—faithful and true. Oh, Hope, you don't know; you never can. It was horrible out there alone in the dark. I expected every minute to hear the bear come growling along, and to be eaten up, Oscar and I too. Louis even was afraid; so I tried to make believe I wasn't, but Hope, my blood ran cold every time I heard anything stir."

"Hush, darling! hush!" said Hope, soothingly, "don't let us talk or think anything more about it; it's all over now; you are safe in bed, and so is Oscar, and you will never disobey so again as long as you live —never—never"—and Hope unconsciously folded her hands together, and laid them on the bed close by Grace, as if she was praying for her.

"But it isn't over," said Grace, restlessly. "You don't know, Hope, I don't think my father does, or Nor-

man, or Mr. Brosseau, or any of them. Come here, I want to whisper it into your ear. We set fire to the woods, Oscar and I, and Louis says they can hang us for it."

Grace's eyes dilated with terror, as she uttered these words, and without waiting for an answer, she hurried on.

"He says all the towns will be out as soon as they see the blaze, and that they will see it before morning; then they will hunt us up, and the sheriff will take us off to jail. Oh, Hope, Hope, Hope!"

Hope had turned even paler than Grace herself, as she heard these dreadful tidings. She tried in vain to speak as Grace clung nervously to her; she could not utter a word, it seemed as if her tongue was fastened by a heavy weight. And at last she said,—

"Grace, I must find father and tell him, this very moment.

"No, no. How cruel you are! Louis said he never would tell, if they cut off his head. Oscar's gone to sleep; and if we don't confess, perhaps nobody will ever know. I shouldn't have told, but I thought I should go crazy if I didn't."

Hope was moving toward the door before Grace had finished.

"Where are you going, Hope? don't leave me for an instant. Oh, don't, don't; if anybody comes—any sheriff, I mean—you must throw yourself on the bed,

right over me, and pretend you don't know anything about me."

"I can't, Grace; I *must* find father and Norman."

Without waiting for another word of expostulation, Hope ran in search of her father. He was on a hill, at a short distance from the house, anxiously watching the progress of the fire on the mountains, which now, by dense clouds of smoke, and now by bright forks of flame, made itself visible even at that distance.

Hope stopped when she first saw the fire. It was all true then, Grace had set fire to the forests, and oh, horrible, must go to prison and be hung! For a moment everything swam before her; her terror was so great that it took from her the power of motion, then summoning all her strength, she seemed to herself to fly over the distance which separated her from her father and rushed screaming to him, in a manner which terrified both her father and Norman.

"Oh, the fire! the fire, father! Poor Grace! don't let them touch her; she didn't mean to; she is so sorry!"

"Did Grace kindle that fire in the woods?" said Norman, comprehending the whole thing in a moment.

"She says she did, and Oscar too. Don't let them touch her; she is so sorry—"

"Be quiet, Hope," said her father, "and tell me what all this means."

Hope made a great effort, in which her father helped her, by taking her little trembling hands in his and

holding them firmly. She repeated all that Grace had told her, and Louis was immediately sent for to explain the whole. This he did readily; the trout, the fire for cooking them, the attempt to extinguish it, when they saw it had caught the trees, and the fright which it gave them. Mr. Evans' opinion of Louis rose from that recital. It was straightforward, brave and true; and he gave him, after it was finished, the praise which was his due. Louis was as unused to be praised as blamed; the let-alone policy of his education had extended to both sides; so now he had a faint, dim idea, that it was quite a good plan to speak the truth, or, as he called it, "own up all round."

There was one part of his recital, however, which he softened very much, that was the consequences by which he had frightened the children. He really knew no such extreme measures would be taken as he had threatened; but, after all, it was very much the way his father had talked to him if he wished to keep him out of any particular kind of mischief.

The question now was, Could anything be done to extinguish the fire? Mr. Brosseau said directly, No: that sometimes a fire accidentally kindled burned for weeks on the mountains, destroying a vast amount of fine lumber; but, in all his mountain-life, he had never known one put out before it spent itself.

The only comfort he could give Mr. Evans was, that the wind was in a direction to-night to blow it down

rather than up, or across the mountain; and that as far as he could judge from the direction it was taking, it would burn to the borders of a pond which lay there and there go out.

This being all quickly discussed and settled, Hope was assured that no harm could come to Grace or Oscar, as fires were not of unfrequent occurrence, and no one thought of attempting to ascertain their cause; and so, with a very much happier heart, she ran home to impart the glad tidings to Grace.

Grace's nervous system had yielded to the accumulated troubles. Fright, anxiety, and pain, were all forgotten, and when Hope went back into her room, she found her asleep. With a very noiseless step Hope made arrangements for spending the night watching by her bed. Everything she did had such a mature, experienced look, that Winny, when she came softly in to see that all was right for the night, never doubted for an instant what the child's intention was.

She endeavoured by much dumb expostulation to prevail on her to go away and let her stay, but in vain; so hearing Mr. Evans return, she hastened out to him, not doubting that he would second her authority. Her surprise was therefore very great, when he told her Hope would do better than any one else; he always felt safe to leave her, and would himself see that she went to bed and to sleep.

"Mr. Evans," said Winny, reproachfully, "I don't

want to be sarsy, but I mistrust me that you put a great deal on this 'ere child than such a chit ought to bear. She is as old as her ma, now."

But this was far from Mr. Evans' intention. He saw that Hope was comfortably in bed, before he retired himself; then going many times during the night to the room, he watched them both; Grace, in the uneasy sleep which always comes with pain of body and pain of mind—poor Grace had both to-night—and Hope in the sweet, sound sleep, which the dear angels bring to those upon whom Christ has placed his hands, and given "the blessing."

In one of his visits Mr. Evans met Norman. He looked pale and very wearied; he had slept but little, the glare and smoke from the woods were just before his window. He was full of innumerable fears for the future. If neither Grace nor Oscar were to be trusted, what would come of them in such an exposed situation?

Mr. Evans felt grieved to find Norman, while so young, so filled with the cares which belong only to maturity. It seemed to him as if it was one of the hardest appointments in the lot God had given him, that of seeing this promising child deprived of all the means of improvement, which he should be enjoying, and already growing into manhood's cares and anxieties. He said to him to-night a few tender words of throwing all our burdens upon Him who is able to bear them for us, assured him that all was going on well in Grace's

room, and an hour after found, to his great relief, that Norman had forgotten all and was resting, but as Mr. Evans said to himself, only for another day of hard toil, another step out of the boy's sphere into the man's. "Cast thy burdens on the Lord." He found reason to repeat the lesson he had given Norman, many times to himself; and even then, the day looked into his window before he slept.


VIII.—OSCAR'S CONFINEMENT.

VIII.

Oscar's Confinement.

THE bear hunt came off, as had been agreed on, the next Saturday. It was an occasion which called out all the good fellowship of the community, and a large number gathered from far and near to assist in the adventure. The fire in the woods had, as Mr. Brosseau predicted, raged for miles in width, until it came to the pond; there it stopped, and by Saturday noon the cloud of smoke began to disappear from the mountain side. This was favourable for the hunt, and, before two, horns were heard sounding in all directions from the different approaching parties.

Grace, after the first twenty-four hours, was quite free from pain in her ankle, if she kept the limb still; she was also very much relieved by learning that she had done no uncommon act in setting fire to the woods, and that she was neither to be hung nor put in jail; indeed, the reaction upon her spirits was so great that she seemed happier than ever on this same Saturday

when the parties, in accordance with an invitation from her father, came on the lawn in front of the house, for ginger-beer and refreshments, before starting for the mountain. It was indeed a grotesque gathering enough and one which the children could never forget.

Such queer-looking men in their hunting accoutrements, accompanied with dogs, quite as droll as the masters. Winny, with all the children but Grace, was very busy serving the cake and sandwiches, and so many witticisms were flying to and fro, that the room where Grace was, and from which she could hear as well as see, rang with as merry laughter as if she were in the scene.

Louis and Norman were to be allowed to join the party. Norman was to keep near his father; Louis was to go where and when he pleased; indeed, his known woods' life, and quick habits of observation, made him seem as necessary to the men as their best trained dog. Oscar longed, but did not dare to ask to accompany them; he lingered near his father, looking up very supplicatingly in his face, but his father would not have taken him even had it not been for his disobedience. And, what was almost as trying to Oscar, he would not trust him to be out of the house after the party left, for fear of his attempting to follow them, but sent him into Grace's room, there to remain until me for bed. To be shut up in the house on such an asion, Oscar felt was a punishment too hard to be

borne; he was ashamed to cry where any one could see him, so he determined to vent his displeasure by making himself just as disagreeable as he could to "the girls," and no sooner had the last man wound up the steep mountain path out of his sight, than reminded by Hope of his father's command, he went noisily in, kicking everything over that came in his way, and giving Grace's vase of flowers, which she always kept in the window by her chair, a knock with his elbow, which sent it out of the window, breaking it to pieces on the ground below.

Grace caught him by the collar, and was none too sick to give him a good hard shaking; so hard that, for some minutes after, objects had a very uncertain and wavering look to him, and the final result was not very beneficial to his good humour. He managed to overthrow the chair which held Grace's lame foot, calling from her a shriek of pain, which brought both his mother and Winny into the room. His mother never had any patience to spare for him, so she told Winny to carry him up to his room, and lock him in; a command which Winny willingly obeyed, notwithstanding he threw himself upon the ground and resisted by main force; but what was his main force to Winny! She waited only long enough to assure herself that he was not going to help himself, then, taking him up as if he had been a baby, instead of a great struggling boy, she carried him up stairs, deposited him with some force

upon the middle of the floor, and Oscar heard the key turn in the lock, and knew that he was a prisoner for that night, at least. But Winny's authority was never so supreme that it would not do to rebel; so, he no sooner heard the sound of her footsteps die away, than he commenced a series of vigorous kicks and thumps upon the floor, just where she had left him. These he continued for some time, but finding no one took any notice of them, he added a howl, as loud and long as he could make. That his mother's or Grace's nerves would long bear this, he did not believe, and if his mother came he was sure of an immediate release. When he became tired, he would rest first one foot, then the other, change his tone, and otherwise contrive to make the racket as easy to himself as he could. He was beginning, however, to feel that he must stop from sheer fatigue, when the door suddenly opened, and instead of his mother, there stood Winny. In her hands she held a rope—he recognised it at once as his sled rope—and a dish-towel, which looked as if she had caught it up suddenly, without waiting to make a choice. Advancing toward him, without a word, she seized him by one of the offending legs and arms, and swung him into a chair which stood near. The chair was then planted with no very gentle noise precisely in the middle of the room, his feet pushed up on the first round, and the rope twisted over and over, until Oscar knew they were tied fast. He began to

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strike and pinch, using what voice he had left to the utmost advantage, but this was but a very temporary triumph. His hands shared the fate of his limbs, and soon he was as immovable as if he had on hand-cuffs. Nothing remained but to scream and call Winny names —some very naughty names, too, we are sorry to say,— but Winny's great mouth only shut a little closer, and her red face became a shade redder. She evidently was not through yet; the dish-towel which she had thrown down was taken up, and Oscar saw, to his dismay, that she was making a bandage of it, the use of which immediately suggested itself. Winny was very quick; he felt the wet thing over his mouth, and knew that there was an unpleasant feeling of great knuckles invading the back of his head, of locks of hair pulled with no gentle force, and of ears, so closely pressed, that they began to ache instantly.

He tried hard to make an intelligible sound; before this last indignity all the naughty child had melted away, and if he could only have uttered a word it would have been very penitent indeed. But it was now too late; there was no look of mercy in Winny's face, though he turned his eyes so imploringly towards her; she did not notice the great tears which came, and rolled down on the towel; no, it was very evident that he had nothing to hope for from her.

After this was all done, Winny, stepping a few steps in front of him, in order to inspect her work more

thoroughly, lifted up her two forefingers most impressively, and said, in a voice which Oscar too well knew betokened no relenting,—

"Now, Oscar Evans, you may kick and scream as much as you've a mind to. Ain't you ashamed of yourself; you are the worst boy I ever see in all my life. You've set your mother stark, staring mad; and there's poor, sick Grace can't tell which end her head is on; no more can any on us; why, I should have thought all Bedlam was let loose. Who do you suppose is a-going to have any marcy on you? No, no, Oscar Evans, you are the naughtiest, wickedest, noisiest boy in the Green Mountain; and them bears, I daresay, will be as ready to come out of the woods and eat you up as they ever were to eat them tother children; if it wasn't now that they had gone a-hunting on't, there is no telling but it might have been found right here;" and Winny gestured with those two uplifted fingers to and fro from the woods to Oscar most ominously.

Oscar was the picture of distress; but Winny's heart was too disturbed to be easily reached this time. She went to the door, then turned back to say, "Sit there, a-reciting 'Let dogs delight to bark and bite,' as hard as you can, that is the best work for sich naughty boys." Then the door was closed again, the lock turned, and Oscar was left once more by himself.

What a long afternoon it was. Oscar shed floods of

tears. He listened as well as he could with his bandaged ears, but no step came near his room. He knew that Hope was out with the children in the flower-garden under his window; once or twice a muffled sound, as of happy laughter, came in through his small window; once he thought Hope was calling his name, but if she did, it was very softly. Winny was not to be interfered with, all the children knew that; and they knew, too, that when she attempted to discipline, it was in such extreme cases that their father generally bore her out.

Oscar never liked to ask her how long he was there; he knew he never suffered so much in his whole life put together as he did then. Any struggling seemed to make the matter worse; and tired out, he had at length fallen asleep, when he was roused by a laugh so loud and cheery that there was no doubt from whence it had come; and, opening his eyes, there stood Hope with a tray full of supper for him.

"Oh, Oscar," she said, as soon as she could speak, "you look like—like a mummy. I never saw anything so droll. Oh, me, me, there's nothing but your eyes, and your brown hair; no hands nor feet. I should think you were a bent stick with a wig on."

Oscar was evidently confused; he didn't seem to know where he was, or what it meant, until he tried to move, then it flashed over him, but he was in no mood to join in Hope's laugh; he would have said

something cross if he could have spoken, but he fortunately could not. Hope put down the waiter, and began to untie the towel. "Would Winny let her?" This was the first question Oscar asked, as he stole a frightened look toward the door. Oh, if Winny wouldn't come until he had spoken just one word, what a comfort it would be. We never know our blessings until we are deprived of them. If Oscar, when he had been wasting so much breath in his loud screaming, had only imagined the time was so near when he should be grateful to make the least sound, we imagine he would have spared a little of the extra noise then; but we must live and learn. Oscar had been taking lessons in the comfort derived from being a bad boy very fast of late.

Hope was some time in loosening the knot. Winny never did anything by halves; but at last the towel fell, and Oscar had the strange feeling of being the possessor of mouth and ears.

"Speak, can't you?" said Hope, a little frightened at Oscar's stillness.

"I don't know," said Oscar, doubtfully using his lips as if they had been partially paralyzed.

Hope, as soon as she found he was not dumb, proceeded to untie his hands and feet. Once more at liberty, she helped him down from the chair. He was so stiff he could not move straight, but reeled about like a drunken person. Hope began to feel very sorry

for him, and indignant at Winny for having punished him so severely. "It's too bad," she said, the tears coming into her eyes. "Winny had no business to do such a thing. I'll tell father the very minute he gets home."

"Perhaps you didn't hear him taking on then," said Winny's voice just behind them. "If you had, and had seen your ma, you would know that there wasn't no bones to be made about it, no way."

Both children started, and Oscar clung so close to Hope that there was no mistaking his alarm.

"You've said your hymn and your prayers, and made up your mind to be a better boy for the futur', I hope," said Winny, looking at him kindly.

"Ye-e-e-e-s," faltered out Oscar.

"Well, then, the Lord will help ye; he helps all little folks who are in earnest. He seed you all the time you have been a-sitting here; and He knowed all about the ropes and the dish-towel, a great deal better than you or I could tell Him; and He'll watch you now and see whether you really mean to be a good boy or are jist a-saying it."

"He will try to be good, poor little Oscar," said Hope, drawing him very close to her.

"No, don't be a-fooling with him," said Winny, somewhat sharply, "cause that ain't the way. You may talk to him, Hope, as much as you've a mind to, and tell him what I heard you telling Guy just

about that little child that never told no lies, nor never knocked her head nor feet, nor screamed out as Oscar did, but don't ye be a-making a baby of him, what ought to be a man, and know how to behave as well as his father. But what *is* the matter with this 'ere boy's feet?" Winny caught him up, took him in her good motherly lap, pulled off his shoes and stockings, and finding, very much to her relief, that there were no bones broken, nor even a mark left on the tender white flesh to show which way the rope had gone; she rubbed them gently, restored the circulation which had become somewhat torpid from their long confinement, and this being done, told Hope to bring the tray, which she held all the time, while Oscar, still in her lap, was devouring his supper. She then dispatched Hope to the kitchen for a fresh supply of berries and cake for him, and watched them disappear with such a look of fond delight that had Oscar wished more he might have eaten while any remained. Certainly by the time the meal was ended, Winny and he were the best of friends, and when Winny went back to the kitchen, he went with her, and sat down very meekly by the window where she was washing the dishes.

"Come out and play, Oscar," shouted Maud from the garden.

Oscar looked at Winny. "Yes, go 'long," she said, pleasantly, "only *remember*," and she raised the ominous forefingers again.

Oscar flew out; how refreshing the air felt; how very blue the sky was; how very sweetly the birds sang. A sense of enjoyment in the world abroad new to him came to the boy, he looked around for Hope, there she was coming to play with them. Was there ever such a sister before? Oscar bounded to meet her, and as Hope held out her hand to him, she said: "Dear Oscar, I wish you would learn to be 'faithful and true,' then all this need not have happened; you would have gone with the other boys and had such a nice time."

Oscar would on any other night have said, "Don't preach, Hope;" but to-night he hung his head and looked so sad and silent, that Hope could not resist her inclination to make him happy; so they all began an active, noisy game before Grace's window, and it would have been difficult to tell which enjoyed it most, the child within, the children without, or Winny, who filling up the front door entirely with her broad figure, laughed and cheered them on as if she was only an old child, whose grey hairs time had touched, but whose heart she had kept out of his reach.

It was hardly dark when the horns began to be heard from the mountain far and near. The party were evidently returning—had they caught the bear? The excitement of the family at Glenburn grew more and more intense as the calls grew more frequent. Perhaps the bear had escaped them, and was making

his way down to the open land, the horns sounding so furiously to give them warning.

Mrs. Evans, always timid, became so much alarmed that she called all the children into the house, had every blind and window closed, and the door shut and fastened. It was singular to see Hope among the frightened group. She was perfectly calm, though watchful, and tried in such an old way to quiet every one else, that Winny, in giving a recital of the scene to her father, said, "For all the world the chit seemed like Mrs. Methuselah, and she didn't believe any of them revolutionary women that there was such a fuss made about were a bit the braver, or would have stood out a bear's coming half so well." Certain it is, her presence of mind and coolness had much to do with preserving to her mother any nerves with which to await the issue, for Mrs. Evans' "nerves" had become to her family actual existences, things to be as much dreaded and shunned as the ogre which tradition gives as a family inheritance to some of our ancestors.

Before very long, the noise of the horns was exchanged for the more intelligible one of men's voices; and Oscar turning a blind carefully to a window behind his mother's back, and looking out, saw in the distance, a great moving black thing, but he could not tell whether it was men or bears. His exclamation of surprise brought all, even his mother, to the window. Grace quickly pushed open the blind; then they saw it was

a crowd of men, and as they all seemed to cluster in one spot, Grace immediately pronounced the probability that they had killed the bear, and were bringing it home.

"Let me go, mamma; mamma, please do!" said Oscar, imploringly. Winny took him by the shoulders, and opening the door stealthily pushed him out, whispering, "Yes, go, he can't do you no harm, now you are such a good boy, but stick as close to your father as you can get, 'cause if he wasn't quite dead, you know, it might be bad." Oscar was out in an instant; he was a bold boy, fond of everything boyish and adventurous. From these traits arose his greatest temptations; and now he never paused for a moment to consider Winny's fear of his not being quite dead, but was soon in the midst of the crowd, with his hand on the great, shaggy, black monster they were dragging along.

Louis saw him, and coming to him, commenced a recital of the fight and the capture, which made Oscar open his eyes very wide, and even draw his hand away, at which Louis laughed, and plunged his own up to the elbow into the open mouth of the bear, whose white teeth and great lapping tongue made Oscar shudder as he looked at them, but Norman, who had been watching both the boys, took hold of Oscar's arm, and as Louis drew his out, plunged it into the same place. Oscar did not scream, though he wondered why he did not,

to the end of his life, for it was to him an instant of mortal terror. By the time they had reached the house he had become quite familiar with the dead animal, and was ready when the crowd separated before the door to show off to great advantage before his sisters and the little French girls who had run out to see the sight, though Grace did call, "Pooh, Oscar, if I only could walk out there, I shouldn't be afraid to put my bare arm in."

The animal proved very large and fierce, and had not been killed without considerable risk as well as sport to the hunters. Mr. Evans felt, as he stood over the bear, that the danger to his family had been even greater than he had feared. He felt very grateful to the kind Providence which had guarded them sleeping and waking; and the earnest way in which he expressed this feeling the rough mountainers remembered whenever they recalled this bear-hunt.

The bear was cut up and carried off in carts to neighbouring towns to be sold; and so ended the adventures which had clustered around him.


IX.—THE SCHOOL.

IX.

The School.

GRACE'S ankle, though it recovered very rapidly from the sprain, was far from strong. She was entirely cut off from her customary rambles among the mountains, and obliged to content herself with very short walks, or a seat under some of the trees which grew near the house. Naturally active, the confinement became, in a few weeks, very irksome to her. She was not particularly fond of reading when the birds were singing and the sky was blue. Sewing she had a distaste for, at all times, and nothing served to increase it more than to feel obliged to do anything with her needle. There were, of course, in so large a family, many stitches to be taken, and the hours when Grace was idling around really unhappy for want of occupation, she might have employed in this way both for the comfort and happiness of the family.

Mrs. Evans sewed a great deal for one so feeble, and though it both worried and fretted her, still she knew

it must be done. Hope was always ready to do what she could, but she had the entire care of Maud and Guy, and Oscar too, now; for since his summary punishments, he had clung to her as if he felt he was only safe in her presence from further disgrace.

Mr. Evans, as he saw more of the French family, felt less disposed to be strict in the rules which he had at first made to regulate the intercourse of his children with them. Mr. Brosseau proved honest and trusty, full of care-taking and interest in whatever was to be done, and had no bad habits like drinking, or smoking, or profanity, so common with those of his class. Louis, too, he had put to several severe tests, and though he was not remarkable for any good traits, he certainly had no very bad ones; and was so happy and merry that he was sunshine wherever he went; indeed, Mr. Evans began to feel as if he were quite a safeguard to his children whenever he was with them, and therefore told Hope he had no objections to Louis accompanying them if they intended to go far out of sight of the house. Mrs. Brosseau made herself very helpful to Winny in many ways about the farm-work, which was heavy, and in addition to that of the family, sent poor Winny to bed many nights, too tired to be even grateful for the "home among the children." While Mrs. Brosseau was busy in Mrs. Evans' kitchen, it was curious to see the means she resorted to to keep her own children out of mischief at home. One, which she employed

oftenest, was to dig a hole in front of her door, where the sun lay warm and smiling all the day long, and plant the baby up to its arm-pits in it, pulling near it various playthings with which it amused itself, crowing and laughing as happily as if in its mother's arms. The next child played near, so as to have a little general oversight of the baby and speak to her if she became impatient, or pushed a toy beyond her reach. The eldest, seven years-old, was generally hanging around the Evans' children, not really coming up to play with them, but joining as heartily as she could with voice and eyes outside the garden palings. Norman, whose vigilant care was everywhere, proposed to his father when he saw how restless Grace was from her partial confinement, that "she could gather all the children together and keep a little school for them." Mr. Evans thought it would be an excellent plan, if by any means Grace could be made regular and faithful in the discharge of her new duties; but this he doubted. She was far too thoughtless, too volatile, still he made no objections to her having the trial, particularly as when it was proposed to her, it seemed to be the very pleasantest of all things. Grace was much quicker to learn a lesson than Hope. The great difference between the children was, that when committed, it very often happened that Grace knew hers only imperfectly, while Hope had slowly and carefully plodded over every word, and was mistress of it all. Pains-taking is the great

element of faithfulness. Now, in studying together, Grace was as willing and as anxious to learn as Hope, but for the *pains-taking*, it was a different matter. She caught the meaning of a thing quickly, or if not that, the prominent words; for the minute particulars, for all the "ifs" and "ands" and "buts," they never seemed of any consequence whatever. Still, Mr. Evans thought lessons to hear were very different things from lessons to learn; and while she might omit the smaller parts herself, she might prove quick and vigilant in detecting all such failings in another. At any rate the trial could do no injury, and it would be a great relief to their mother to have all the little folks kept out of her sight and hearing for a few hours together. No one was more ready to join in this new plan than Hope; she had no feeling but one of pleasure in having Grace mistress while she was scholar; and if there came now and then into her wise little head a doubt as to the amount which she might learn from so experienced a teacher, she kept it to herself, there would be at least a quiet time in which she could study, and this was one of the greatest pleasures of Hope's life.

The corn-barn, with the door wide open in order to admit light and air, was the place chosen, and never were busier or happier children than these while getting it in order for the school. Mr. Evans spared Norman a whole day from the field, and it was surprising with

him for master workman what a deal of work was done, and in the end what a pretty place they made. There were a good many planks left from repairing the house. These were placed on round blocks, and covered with bits of the gay carpets which had come from their old home in Castleford, for the benchea. The teacher's desk was on a platform raised a foot from the floor, and likewise carpeted, while the desk itself was an old table, draped with a partially faded, brocatelle curtain, but bright and showy in the parts most visible to the scholar. Grace had an arm chair, "a world too wide" to be sure, but none the less dignified to young eyes for that; and arranged with much neatness before her, were books, pen, ink, and—Grace would have it—a long birchen rod. Of course, her father forbade her on any occasion to use it; but she said it was as necessary for the completion of the room as the spelling-books, or the geography, and that her discipline would be very imperfect without it.

The morning the school commenced, Lauretta, the largest French girl, was seen looking in with very longing eyes. Maud ran directly to ask her father if she might be admitted, and he willingly consented; so a seat was made for her next to Hope, and Etta, as they called her, became a scholar.

It was a beautiful morning, this first one of gathering the school together; the woods beckoned to Oscar with their great green arms as he went up the steps to

go in, and every bird called just as if it knew that their little playmate was done with play and going to learn to be a man. Grace had dressed herself purposely for the occasion. She did not allow any one, not even Hope, to know anything of it, until, punctual on the stroke of Winny's clock for nine, she emerged from the grape arbour, where she had been hidden for the last half hour, and took her way demurely toward the school-house. She wore the largest, darkest dress she had; and tied over it was a long black silk apron of her mother's which met in the back, and, confining her dress, seemed to wrap her in, as if she had slipped herself into a black pillow-case. Then she had borrowed what Winny called "a vandyke" from her. It was made of a kind of brown serge, trimmed with the finest of black fringe, and, buttoning down close in front, with lasting buttons. Over this was one of Winny's largest collars, a plain cambric, trimmed with tatting, and this she fastened with a black bow. A greater caricature of a little old maid never was seen than this child, as she stepped along with a slow step made a little peculiar by the lameness yet lingering from the injured ankle; and yet the face coming out from all this, with the violet eyes, and the tucked up curls, was the very ideal of perfect child-beauty.

Of course the children all laughed as she came in at the door, and of course, while her eyes laughed the merriest of all, the little rosy lips were drawn up into

a pucker, and not a muscle of the face relaxed into a smile.

Now how to begin! Norman, to be sure, had given her a lesson every day for a week, and told her precisely what she was to do and say; but Norman did not make any allowance for the children being in a great frolic, so, of course, all his advice was thrown away. Grace cast a wondering look down from her desk; but she was quick in devices, so, seizing the birch, she waved it triumphantly over head several times, saying as she did so, "Order in the school."

Then came one long, loud laugh, in which, despite her dignity, Grace joined, and the children hastily opened the books which were hung on the seats beside them.

"The first class in Arithmetic," said Grace, after a few minutes' silence, "will take their places in front of the desk." Hope took her slate and book, and went out alone, standing very still and grave, while Grace, making a mistake in the place, gave her a lesson twice too long; but Hope thought it better not to make any remark, but to return to her seat and do the best she could.

Guy followed next, he must come to learn his letters; now Guy was not used to being taught by any one but Hope, and at first he was quite inclined to rebel, but Hope took his hand and led him to Grace, who immediately conciliated him by a lump of sugar which she had hidden in her pocket for the purpose,

and drew out from him a half dozen letters by the promise of another piece before each one. In the meantime, Etta and Maud, not having anything else to do, had dressed up a doll, out of Maud's handkerchief, and were in a full career of play when Grace saw them. The doll was such a droll looking thing, that not to laugh at it was impossible, particularly as Etta had pinned on small blue violets where the eyes should be, and a leaf of wild honeysuckle for the mouth. The children both looked a little frightened when they were discovered, and Etta hid the doll behind her back; but Grace took it from her, and opening their spelling-books gave them a long column of one-syllable words to learn; but here arose a difficulty. Etta did not know her letters, and now she stared at the spelling-books before her with a dull wonder as to what it could be for. She had never been inside a real school-room in her life; and it is very doubtful whether she had ever seen a book, or certainly whether before she had ever taken one into her own hands. Now she turned the book curiously from side to side, as if astonished to find it filled with such little black marks; then noticing that Maud held hers still, and seemed to look on one spot only, she fastened her eyes on what appeared to be the same place, and with it upside down, was profoundly attentive

"I am ready," said Maud, at length, "if Etta is."

"Are you ready?" asked Grace.

Etta nodded her head, and followed Maud into the middle of the floor. "Now stand very straight. Hold your heads up, and speak very loud. The one who does not miss a word is at the head; the other is at the foot."

"'CAT.' Maud Evans, you may spell first."

"C-A-T," said Maud promptly.

"Right. 'DOG,' Etta Brosseau."

Etta opened her black eyes very wide, and stared full in Grace's face, but did not attempt to spell.

"'DOG.' Can't you spell 'DOG?'" said Grace, encouraginly.

"C-A-T," said Etta.

"No. C-A-T spells 'CAT.' This is 'DOG.' 'D.'"

"D."

"Well, don't you know it?"

"D," repeated Etta.

"D," said Grace, prolonging the letter in hopes the next one would come; but no; so she passed it to Maud, who immediately spelt it; and then Grace, who had had too many injunctions about being thorough to be willing to omit any occasion for being so to begin with, made Etta repeat it over and over, until she was quite sure she knew it. But her experience with the rest of the lesson was precisely the same; it was obvious that Etta had not learned a single word of it, while Maud's lesson was perfect. Grace tried to be very good-natured, though decided, as she sent her

back to her seat; but Etta did not understand this part any better than the other, or she would not have gone so readily. When she saw, however, that Maud put away her spelling-book and took another, she instantly followed her example, nor could Grace by any means compel her to return to the "Dog." She tried faithfully with her, until the time came for recess; then she would gladly have made Etta keep in her seat, but the child ran after Maud, and could not be restrained. "She is a great stupid dunce," said Grace to Hope the moment the child had gone. "I'll tell father as soon as I get home that I won't have her here another time; only think of her not knowing one single word of that easy lesson.

Hope had been so busy with her sums, that she had not a very clear idea of what had been going on; but when she saw how annoyed Grace was, she took Etta's spelling-book, and ran out after her, with the intention of making her learn it during recess, if she could. But Etta was not to be caught; she saw Hope coming with the mysterious covered blue thing in her hand, and flew away as quickly as the bird she was chasing. Hope lay in wait for her by the steps, and when the recess was over, and she was following Maud back, she drew her gently down into her lap, and said:—

"Come, Etta, let you and I learn this together."

"Yes;" said Etta, sitting down very meekly, but looking steadily in Hope's face.

"There," said Hope (pointing to a large D), "what letter is that?" Etta shook her head, but said nothing.

"Be a good little girl, and tell me quickly; then I will tell you."

Etta gazed on the page with such a vacant, wondering look, that Hope asked,—

"Don't you know it?"

Etta shook her head. "Why, don't you know your letters?"

"Be them things letters?" asked Etta, pointing to the cabalistic signs.

"Yes, of course they are. Haven't you ever learned A, B, C?"

Etta shook her head. "I don't know them things."

"No wonder you couldn't get your spelling lesson. Grace, this child doesn't know her letters!"

Grace came quickly to the door, and the whole ridiculousness of the scene she had been enacting for the last half hour, struck her so forcibly, that she broke out into a loud laugh, at which Etta looked frightened and vexed, and clung very close to Hope.

"Why didn't she say so, then?"

"I am sure I don't know; but I rather think she never saw a letter before, and had no idea what they meant. She acts as if she had not. Had you, Etta?"

She shook her head very decidedly.

"Well, then, she must go into the primary class, Guy will be very glad to have a class-mate."

Etta shook her head again.

"Don't turn Chinese toy, and do nothing but shake your head, Etta; don't you know all good scholars do just as the teacher wants to have them?"

"Go 'long with her?" said Etta, pointing to Maud.

"But Maud knows all her letters, and can read quite well."

"Read! what's that?"

"What a heathen you are, Etta Brosseau; don't you really and truly know what reading is?"

Again Etta shook her head.

"Look here, Etta, don't shake that head of yours, again; haven't you a mouth so that you can speak like other children?"

Etta opened hers so wide, there was no room at least for the doubt that she possessed the organ, but made no sound. By this time all the children had left their seats and were gathered in a little group around Etta. Hope was the first to perceive this was out of order; and whispering a word to Grace, she ordered them quite peremptorily back to their places, and recommenced the business of the morning. But already a spring was out of order. Etta, though she followed Maud in, insisted upon using a book, just like the one in which she was studying, holding it as meekly before her, and sitting as still, as if she too

were busy with her task. The sight annoyed Grace; she spoke to Etta several times, but Etta took no notice of her, or if she did any, it was only to shrug her shoulders, and sit a little nearer Maud.

One more recess, a few more preliminary lessons, and school was over for this morning. Now, what were they to tell their father? Grace well knew his first inquiry would be after her success, when he came home to dinner.

"Tell him?" said Hope, in answer to her inquiry; "why, there is but one thing to tell him, and that is the simple truth. We have had a very nice school for the first day; we shall have a better one to-morrow. I dare say Norman will best know what to do with Etta directly, he is always so good for straightening out things."

So, Mr. Evans and Norman were very much interested in learning all the particulars, and as Hope had predicted, Norman was ready at once with his suggestion.

"Why, let Maud learn her letters over again. I dare say she is unselfish and obliging enough to be willing to do so, for Etta's sake."

Maud really was unselfish and obliging; and, like everybody else who has good traits, she liked to be told of it. She very willingly consented to learn all over again, and was even planning how to seem as ignorant as Etta, when Hope stopped her, with—

"No, Maudy, that is not at all necessary; seem just what you are, a good, kind little girl, and don't try anything else. You can help Etta best in that way."

"Very right, Hope," said her father, who had been listening to the dialogue between the children, with much interest. "Be, and not seem. Those are the little ones whom God loves,—truthful, simple, honest children. If you could all remember that to act a thing which was not true, was to show God that you have the deceitful heart which he abhors, I am sure you would be very careful of the least word or act which was not exactly true."

Maud hung her head; was her father finding fault with her? He noticed it, and said kindly:—

"I do not think my little Maud meant to do anything that was wrong now, but I wish she should grow up with such a dread of anything that is at all deceitful, that it will never enter into her thoughts to seem not to know what she really does, even if by so doing she hopes to benefit another."

Grace listened attentively; there was a mystery about this perfect honesty of character which she could not quite understand. She never meant harm, she was sure, and yet very often, to make others happy, she had pretended a great many things, and she was always wondering how it was that Hope, who was the most straight-forward being in the world, always succeeded in the end in attaching those she loved very much to herself.

The afternoon was a holiday: and everybody knows it is just enough to give that name to any day, for children to make it a very happy time indeed. How much there was to be done now! Oscar talked about it, like a tired student home from the end of a long college term, and made formidable preparations for spending it. Even the girls planned a pic-nic, and Winny was easily teased into giving them a nice tea, to take out under the large maple that hung with its thick canopy of leaves far into the garden.

So closed this first school-day. For the week ensuing, things went on in pretty much the same way. Maud learned her letters with so much spirit that Etta and even Guy caught the enthusiasm; and it was astonishing what rapid progress they both made. Hope committed her lessons, and recited them readily to herself, but with so much simplicity, that it may be doubted whether she ever found it out.

The second week, affairs did not go quite so smoothly. Oscar began to be impatient of the confinement, and to complain that he could not enjoy the liberty which was given to both Norman and Louis. He played truant once; but this was immediately stopped by summary proceedings on the part of his father. It must be confessed too, that the school began to be rather monotonous to the teacher, and she loooked often very longingly out of the open door.

To make matters a little more uncomfortable, hot

August days had come, when everything, even to the insects, seem to feel the heat, and to want to do nothing but bask in shady places and lie and wait to catch any cool breeze that may come straying down the mountain side. The corn-barn was close and sultry in the extreme; the carpet on the seats felt as if it had hung before a large fire to dry, it was so moist and warm. The children came slowly in from under the shadows, divested of every article of dress that could be spared. Grace then threw herself into the large arm-chair, using Guy's new writing-book for a fan, which indignity the boy noisily resisted. Even Hope's courage and constancy flagged. Her slate felt hot; her slate-pencil soon adhered tightly to her fingers; and the leaves of her book clung together as if they had suddenly become sponges. Guy was cross, unmistakably so, and after exhibiting it in sundry uncomfortable ways, he laid his head down on his bench, curled himself up, and fell sound asleep. It was a great relief to have him still. Grace willingly gave up his recitation, if he would not wake.

Eleven o'clock was reached with the utmost difficulty, then came recess; and they all bounded out with more life than it would seem possible, a half hour ago, any one of them possessed. They found a delightful shady nook, just by the corner of the woods, where the stream was flowing. A little knot of spruces and hemlock had been cut by Mrs. Evans' father into a kind of arbour,

years ago; and these, still retaining something of their original form, made one of the prettiest school-rooms that could be imagined. The only wonder was, that being so near to the house the children had not found it before; but they had not, so now the charm of newness—a very great one to a child—was added to all its others.

"We will have the rest of our school out here," said Grace, delightedly. "Oh, how splendid it will be! why, it's worth a thousand million of our old corn-barn! How stupid it has been not to have it here before! There's a place for my desk, and there can be the benches, then we can hang up anything we want on the limbs of the trees. Oh, see what a cone I have found! Here's another just as pretty. What a lot of frames we can make. Come, Hope. Let us move the things right out, so as to finish the other lessons here."

"I think," said Hope, looking around with great delight on their little paradise, "that it would be most delightful, but we had better wait and ask father first. He told us to go to the corn-barn, you know, and he mightn't like to have us move without his leave."

"What a goose you are! As if he would care a farthing, you know he always likes to have us do what will make us the happiest."

"Yes, but he might not think in the long run this would; it would take our attention off our books out here."

"Nonsense, with your 'long runs,' and your 'attention off;' I never saw such a person for throwing cold water on everything," said Grace, pettishly.

"I am sorry, Gracy; I should love to come here better than you would, I dare say; but I do think we should ask father first."

"Then ask father first," and Grace imitated Hope's tones very provokingly. "But I am coming out here, and so shall all the rest of the children. Come, Guy and Maud, we will go and move a bench and the desk; that will do to begin with; we will leave the heaviest things and have Norman to help us after dinner. Miss Hope's too much of an old fuss to be good for anything."

Hope cast a very imploring look at Grace, but Grace took no further notice of her, so she wandered off into the woods, Guy following close behind her. It was a long time it seemed to Hope before the bell rang for recess to be over; but when it did, Hope went back to the school-room and gravely seated herself in her seat, going on with her lessons as usual. Grace had sent Maud with a message for her and Guy to come to the new quarters, but while Hope made no effort to retain Guy, she felt no inclination to go herself.

It was a long, weary, uncomfortable hour enough, this one before she heard the horn which Winny sounded for dinner, and which was the signal for breaking up school. She met all the other children coming as fresh

and happy as if the day was clear and cool out from their pleasant school-room; but they all seemed to regard her as cross or out of temper in some way, so they avoided her, and she went sadly in alone. Norman was seen coming up the lane, and in a moment he was surrounded by them all but Hope, and she could see that they were evidently telling him of their discovery, and begging him to help them. He put down his tools, and was going with them when he seemed suddenly to miss Hope.

"Where's Birdie?" he said, stopping short.

"With her head under her wing, poor thing," said Grace, quoting the child's hymn.

"What's the matter with her?"

"Oh, nothing! only little Miss Prim must stick up her opinion, and say, father hadn't told us, so *she* couldn't come."

"What did she do?"

"Just went back to that hot old corn-barn and roasted herself like a potato. When I saw her she looked as if she had had the measles."

"Dear little Birdie, was there ever such a faithful child since the world was made?"

"You may call it faithful, if you please, Norman; I dare say you will, you always stand up for Hope, no matter what comes; but I call it, prim as an old maid, and awful fussy."

"Quite a difference in terms. But one thing is certain

if Hope thinks father should be asked first, she is right; so we will, with your ladyship's leave, wait until we have consulted him."

"How provoking! I wish I was a boy, I never would ask you to do another thing for me as long as you live. I'll go now and get Louis. I rather think, Mr. Norman Evans, if I am the teacher, I can do as I please."

"So you can with your school, but not with your school-room, little lady; therefore, I would advise you to keep cool, and learn a lesson in patience and faithfulness from your younger sister."

Grace drew herself crossly away, and Norman immediately returned to the house, where his first inquiry was for Hope.

"She had gone to bring a pitcher of fresh water from the spring for Winny." Norman sat down and waited for her. Pretty soon he saw her coming with a troubled look, which she very well knew.

"Halloo Birdie!" he called out; "where's my sunshine gone?"

It was all there in a minute, and having carried the pitcher quickly in, she returned to sit down by his side, and answer the few questions with which he drew out from her all that had passed. Norman did not blame, neither did he praise her; indeed, the boy was wondering whether Hope was quite right, whether she did not verge a little upon what Grace called "fussy and oldmaidish."

Of course, the first thing to be discussed at the dinner-table was the new school-room. Mr. Evans had not the slightest objections to the change, he only wondered they had not thought of it before, and very willingly made arrangements for sparing Norman long enough in the afternoon for the removal. Not a word was said before Hope of her refusal that morning to leave the old school-room; and as Mr. Evans found no fault with the other children, but, on the contrary, seemed pleased with the movement, it was rather to be inferred that Hope had this time been too particular, using a blind obedience for common sense. At any rate, with this Grace taunted her, when they were alone together, and Hope could only answer,—

"I meant only to do what was right, Gracy, and am sorry it vexed you so; no one will be more pleased to change school-rooms now than I shall."

And so Hope was the busiest of the busy, and no one would have supposed she had had a moment's uneasiness or unhappiness, to have seen how obliging, happy, and ready she was; even Grace was almost tempted to forgive her, and not to triumph over her any more.

What a delightful school-room they had when it was all in order; they had thought the other as perfect as it could well be, but it was nothing in comparison; to be sure, the moss upon the benches was rather a fancy seat than one which would be likely to prove per-

manently comfortable, but the present is the only child-time, and nothing could exceed the beauty of the soft, green covers now. Grace's desk, too, was hung with wreaths of the pretty ground pine most tastefully disposed, and even out of the prim school-books peeped tiny little twigs of evergreen, or red fox-berries, with their smooth, glossy green leaves. Louis and Etta were as busy and happy as the others; indeed, there was such a charm about the place, that Rosette brought her baby-sister, dug a new hole close by the arbour, and both of the children looked on as delightful as the rest.

Now the question was, Was not it too pleasant a place for a quiet, attentive school? Hope had her misgivings, but she was not a bird of ill-omen, so she kept her doubts and fears to herself, determining to set a good example, by persevering application to her studies, whatever might happen to divert her thoughts. There was one important difference made by the change of school-room. Louis and Rosette both made a very earnest application to be admitted among the pupils; and upon Louis promising to be orderly and studious, Mr. Evans reluctantly consented. Rosette was four, older than Guy, and very bright. The two made a great difference in Grace's little school.

X.—BLACKBERRYING.

X.

Blackberrying.

THROUGH the long, oppressive dog-days, school was little more than a source of constant delight to the children. Grace, exhilarated by the beauty and tastefulness of everything about her, made great exertion to amuse if not to instruct her young charge. Louis was in earnest in his wish to learn; he was now old enough to understand what an advantage knowledge is even to the day labourer, and having been with Norman at work in the field often of late, he had felt the difference between him and any other boy he had ever associated with, particularly the contrast between themselves. Norman had taught him many new things as they hoed side by side, and what was better still, had incited in him a desire to learn for himself. Now he not only directed his studies, but he prepared Grace in private for the task of teaching him, and gave her many kind brotherly lessons in deportment, which as Grace was in a mood for receiving, had

an important influence in the prosperity of the school.

Occasionally, too, Mr. Evans spent a few hours with them examining into the progress they were making, so that take the school all in all, it could not be considered a failure, even though it was out of doors in this tempting green arbour. Even Hope was beginning to lose all dread of evil, and to enjoy it quite as much if not more than the others, when an event happened which tested the wisdom of the whole plan. It was one of those perfect days in early September, when everything is so full of ripe life and beauty that it seems as if the cup of existence had not room for another drop. The sun falls warm and golden on the rich harvest fields, on the leaf-laden tree, on the seed-forming flowers; even the tiny deserted birds' nests, with their brown wicker-work, fleece-lined, look homelike and tempting to the departing birds, who go back to them, perching upon their rounded edges, singing one more song, filled with sweet promises of an early spring return.

Children talk with nature; she speaks to them in a hundred voices, to which the ear grows deaf as years glide by; she smiles and calls them, and they smile and answer, and we who look on with dimming eyes, wonder at their eager gaze and their half-parted lips, forgetting that once we walked also in this wonder-land, and that to us, as to them, it was peopled with flower-fairies, water nymphs; but most and dearest

of all, with the invisible but very present spirit of love.

School had not been as quiet as usual to-day; there was a weight of gladness in the very air, and it pressed on the young hearts, making them long to throw it off in a frolic, with the beckoning green which waved so coaxingly all around them. Grace was trying her very best not to hear a voice, or see a thing but her little pupils, when school was rather unceremoniously interrupted by Winny, who made her appearance, accompanied by Mrs. Brosseau, and armed with a variety of baskets, tin pails and dippers, which looked as if she and the French woman had gone into the tin and basket peddling business. She was not an unfrequent visitor to this room; but seldom did more than look in with her happy face, nod, and motion to a basket of lunch which she was going to leave for recess, but to-day there was evidently something greater in anticipation; with a sober face, which made the children all laugh, Winny said, "Can I speak with the schoolmistress a minute?"

The "schoolmistress," of course, was very available, and in a moment the children heard her say:—

"Oh, Winny! Winny! I never heard anything so splendid. We must, we will, we shall. You only wait a minute until I dismiss the school."

"La, now! I might have know'd it," said Winny, turning to the French woman. "The child is as wild

as a hawk, and being a schoolmistress until she is as old as Methuselah won't do no good."

"Children!" said Grace, going back to her desk with dancing eyes and glowing cheeks, "you may have a holiday. Winny and Mrs Brosseau are going to the knoll, blackberrying, and we will all go too."

Then there came such a sudden upsetting of benches, such a throwing up of school-books, and such a shouting and screaming, that one would have thought it a school of sixty children instead of six.

Among all the voices was heard Hope's, no less elated than the others, but inquiring. "Did father say we might go?"

No one heard or answered her; so going close to Winny, she pulled her sleeve and asked again.

"No," said Winny. "I didn't ask him nothing about it. I hadn't no thought of taking you, any on you; it's just Grace's notion; her head is always full on um."

"Then I can't go," said Hope, sorrowfully.

"Why, who ever heard of such a thing? what is't that separates you from the rest on um? why can't you be off a berrying this day of your life, as well as they?"

"I don't know; I don't like to go without leave."

"The leave that lets them all go will hold good for you, I'm a thinking. Your father won't care nothing; he never does if *I* take you along."

"Oh, Winny! Winny Dole! I do so want to go; I never went blackberrying in all my life."

"Then jist take the pint cup and come along."

Winny's authority in all small matters was next to her father's; the children seldom went to their mother for anything, and Hope took down her sun-bonnet and tied it on. She remembered how she had refused to leave the school-room that hot day, and how very useless her exact obedience seemed to be; even Norman, who was better and more faithful than she was, not being quite sure that she was right. To-day the temptation was even greater than it was then. It was always a great pleasure to go with Winny anywhere; and now all were to go, even to the French baby who, tucked into a large basket, was swung on her mother's back between her shoulders. A doubt as to its being right to go, had evidently not crossed any other mind but Hope's. The children were wild with delight, and in an incredibly short time had taken possession of every tin pail and basket, and were dancing off before the women in a noisy, not very regular, procession. Hope was among the leaders. Grace's ankle prevented her taking her usual place; indeed, it was rather sad to see the once active child leaning upon Winny every now and then while she raised her foot to ease and rest it.

Louis began to think the "little homely one," after all, quite a pleasant companion, and was loading her

hands with the pretty forest flowers, when Hope said to him, softly,—

"Louis, I am afraid I am doing wrong in coming, father did not say we might; I am going back."

Louis looked at her in astonishment, and dropped the ladies' slippers which he had filled with the delicate blue hare-bell, and was bringing for her.

"Going back; why you are not tired so soon?"

"Not in the least, Louis. I think it's splendid; I want to go dreadfully."

"Then why don't you?"

"Because father told us to stay in the school-room and study; he didn't say we might run off berrying when we wanted to."

"But he didn't say you mustn't," said Louis, shrewdly.

"No; he doesn't say you may do this thing, and you must not do that, for all the little things. He gives us general rules, and he knows if we are faithful in keeping those, all the small matters will go right."

Now Louis had about as much idea of general rules as he had of the principle of faithfulness which Hope's words implied, so he only said, "I don't see any use in your going back. Your father never flogs you now, does he?"

"Oh, dear, no! he only looks so grieved when we do what is wrong. I think, perhaps, I should rather he would do what you call flogging."

Louis shrugged his shoulders. "It hurts, sometimes."

Hope laughed and turned off a path which she knew led back to the school-room by a shorter way than they had come. Her wish was now to escape, if possible, without attracting observation; she knew she should not be able to influence Grace at all in returning herself with the rest of the school; she had no wish to make a parade of doing right; she was only anxious to do so as quietly and unostentatiously as she could.

She heard Louis laugh a very peculiar laugh, half amusement, and half vexation, as she was pushing aside the first tangled branches. What a sudden change had come over this beautiful day! Hope could not see the sun, nor the soft motion of the waving trees; the very flowers she held in her hand grew dim, and seemed moving of themselves, and then Hope knew her eyes were blinded with tears; so she wiped them quickly away, and looked around to see if any one was following her. No, no one but Louis as yet knew she was gone. Oscar was shouting over something which he had found. Hope thought she could distinguish the words, "a nest of young quails." For a moment her foot paused; if there was anything she loved even more than the flowers, it was young birds. If she could only go back and take a peep at them, she would not stop an instant, she would only take one look, and then go resolutely back to her lessons; but Hope did not take even one step

toward the nest. And here is a very important point, which I hope all my young readers will especially notice. Hope had the benefit of her former acts of faithfulness to help her now. Strong as her desire was to go with the party, and to see the birds, her desire to do what was right was stronger still, and it prevented her from taking this one step in what she considered a wrong direction. She put her hands over her ears, so as not to hear what was so tempting to her, and ran resolutely forward. A strange looking little girl she would have been to any one who had met her, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, her face red with the struggle of feeling, her hands over her ears, and running as if she was running away from something of which she was very much afraid.


XI.—HOPE'S TRIUMPH.

XI.

Hope's Triumph.

HOPE had not proceeded far in this way before, in spite of her precautions, she heard her name called, and knew it was by Winny. Winny's voice had a sharp sound at times which rendered it easy for her to send it anywhere she wished. Norman thought he had heard it more than half a mile on some of the mornings when the mountain air was as clear as a bell. Hope stopped. What could Winny want? She answered, "Here!"

"Well, now, where's here; I don't see nothing of you; where you going to? you're out of the path."

"I am going back."

"Going where?"

"Back to the school-room."

"Why, was there ever sich a gal! you had better let them books alone, and come a berrying, it's a lot better for you."

"Hope!" Hope knew it was Grace's voice now that called. "Where are you going?"

"Back to the school to get my lesson."

"What for?"

"Oh, because father didn't say we might come, and I am afraid we ought not!"

"What a goose! Are you so much better than everybody else, I should just like to know?"

Hope made no answer, but turned once more toward the opening, which she could just see before her, and ran resolutely forward. A chorus of voices called upon her, but this time she did not wait to answer; she knew it was best not to parley with temptation, no matter in what form it came, so she did not stop until she was once more in the little school-arbour. Then she threw herself for a moment on to the ground, and indulged in a good hard cry; it was over however very soon, but the eyes were swollen and smarting, that turned upon the long pages of a very dull history lesson, and there was a weight upon the child's heart very unusual for one to feel who is making a sacrifice for what they think is right; still, she kept her eyes, and tried to keep her attention fixed upon the lesson. She had the lost time to make up, and by-and-by, the reward for patient well-doing came; she really became interested in what she was reading, and by the time the sun-dial, which Norman had notched for them on the great hemlock-tree, pointed to the hour of twelve, she was ready to take Winny's place at home, and sound the horn for her father and Norman to come in

to dinner. Winny had made arrangements with Mrs. Evans before she had left, so that everything was in the nicest order, Mrs. Evans having volunteered to do what was necessary, in order to have large jars of her favourite preserved blackberries ready for winter. She was not a little surprised when Hope was the only child who came home from school, and at first felt inclined to fret, but was quickly quieted by the thought of the larger quantity of blackberries so many more hands would gather. Mr. Evans, however, when he learned of the summary breaking up of school, was not so easily satisfied. He was troubled that it should have been done without his permission, and anxious about Grace, who he thought was not at all in a condition to take such a walk, but he said little; only this time he did not forget to commend Hope's faithfulness, in words which brought the colour to her cheeks, and tears of joy to her eyes. She was now more than repaid for all, and Norman looked at her too, with so much fondness, and was so kind. After dinner, with her mother's help, Hope put away all the dinner dishes, and arranged everything in the neatest order; even Winny could not find any occasion for fault-finding, and her mother seemed to have a new and pleasant appreciation of everything she did. Hope was not one of those children who talk with themselves a great deal about what they do. Her way was to *do it*, and leave all the rest unless she feared there had

been something wrong; then, to be sure, she could not forget it, but worried and prayed over it, until there came to her a sweet assurance that God had heard and forgiven her; still, to-day she could not help noticing how everything had seemed sent to make her return from the berrying expedition pleasant to her, how different it was from the last time when she had stayed in the school-room, and no one noticed it, but Grace to blame her. Hope took her sewing and was sitting down in her mother's window, very busy, and very happy, when Norman put his head in at the door, and swung before her a large ten-quart pail. The gesture was very significant, so was Norman's face; but Hope did not understand them, and after waiting a moment, Norman said, "Come, Birdie!"

"Come where?" said Hope, jumping so quickly that the contents of her lap—scissors, reels, and all—went rolling about the floor.

"Over to the three-mile pasture blackberrying."

"O Norman! who with?"

"With me, Birdie. Have you any objection?"

"No, indeed!" said Mrs. Evans, speaking with unusual animation, "she deserves to go, if ever a child did. Put on your rubbers, and tie your sun-bonnet down tight, so you needn't freckle, and keep out of the way of the bears, and I hope you will have a very nice time."

"Thank you, dear mamma; how splendid it is.

Why, Norman how can you go? how came you to think of it?"

"Father says, it's time I had a holiday, and he can spare me as well as not; so as Mr. Brosseau is going to drive right by, down to the mill, he said you and I might go to the three-mile pasture, where there are acres covered with high blackberry bushes, and we can fill a pail like this, in less than no time. Then we are to come home by the place where the children are, and Mr. Brosseau is to stop on his way back, and bring us all home. Do you like it, little one?"

Like it! how Hope's eyes sparkled. Norman held up her head, and looked into them; what if she was not as pretty as Grace, there was something in them deep down, which never for a moment shone up from Grace's violet eyes, beautiful as they were. Hope put her hand in his without an answer, and they went out together, Mrs. Evans calling loudly after them about the "sun-bonnet and the freckles." Hope must have another pail or basket, not quite as large, but so capacious that she held it in a kind of wonder, whether it was not intended to be brought home full of bushes instead of berries. Norman laughed at her and said, "He did not want to raise her expectations too high; he had little doubt there could be bushels picked off from that very place, but they would see."

And now Mr. Brosseau came up to the door with the great cart filled with bags, which were to go to the mill.

Norman puts Hope on the very top of the highest pile, then, clambering up, sits down by her, and puts his arm round her. Mr. Evans is waiting by the first stile to wish his good little daughter a happy ride. Hope "feels like a queen;" as that personage is rather a mystical sort of a personification of perfect happiness, with a young girl, and nods and smiles to her father with such great glee, that the weary man goes back to his hard work with a lighter heart. Away rattles the cart. Crantz is one of the horses, and is as full of life and spirit as if he were renewing his age. Mr. Brosseau has so many stories to tell about him; never was there such a horse, at least, never one of whom his owner thought more.

Norman is as happy as Hope; a holiday to the boy is of rare occurrence, and to-day he feels as if he could have one as well as not, the work has come in to a time when for a few days it will not hurry them. Then, to be with Hope, to be able to do something to reward her for her quiet, patient faithfulness. Norman sees everything that can make her happy. Not an animal runs across their path, but his eye detects it, and he points it out to her; he knows the names of the different forest-trees, and the Frenchman has many stories to tell him of their nature and growth, for he has lived so long among them that they have become to him almost like human beings, and in his broken English, he says of them, "he and she," as if he were

talking of individuals. Sometimes he stops his horses, and points out to Norman a peculiar flower—all the French love flowers, men, as well as women—and waits, good-naturedly, while Norman goes to gather it. Hope looks, before she has half reached the berry-field, like a flower-fairy, for they are wreathed over her sun-bonnet, round her neck, pinned on to the dress in front, and in both hands she carries a large bouquet. Then Mr. Brosseau has such a way of talking with the birds. Norman is an apt scholar and learns it fast. Now he imitates a katy-did, so exactly that in a distant part of the woods a katy answers—now he calls a phebe, and a host of phebes twitter away; even the golden robin, sweetest singer of all, is not proof against him, but comes cutting the air with its bright wings and perches near them, as they roll along, looking with a very suspicious eye among the meal-bags, as if sure there was an imprisoned one of his race. Why, it is as good as a fairy book, for the man is talking with the birds and the birds are talking with the man. Hope only wishes she could understand what they are saying. She wants an interpreter like that which the authors of the fairy books put in at the end, and when she says so to Norman, he becomes interpreter, and makes such pretty stories out of the bird-songs. Hope treasures them all up for Maud and Guy, on some of her story-telling nights, particularly the moral which Norman draws; his birds being all wondrously good and happy.

They came only too quickly to the three-mile pasture. Hope wishes it was much further, and she jumps off the meal-bags with the feeling that the pleasantest part of her afternoon was past; so, she says to Norman, but he only answers,—"We shall see, Birdie."

And now they are in the midst of the bushes. Hope, for the first time in her life seeing a high blackberry bush growing on its stem. For a time she is so full of delight and exclamation that she forgets to pick them, and is only reminded of it by Norman's peeping slyly into her basket to see if it was almost full. Then she begins in earnest, and the two side by side in perfect stillness work away as if their lives depended upon it. At length, Norman laughs out, and says, "You may speak a word if you want, Hope;" and Hope laughs back, shaking her head; her fingers are too busy to leave a moment for her tongue. As Norman had said, bushels could be picked from the field in a short time. His pail filled fast, so did Hope's, and long before they were weary, they found they would not hold another one. The field where Winny had gone with the children, lay nearer home, but in the same direction in which they came; so they went slowly along towards it, planning how they should surprise them best, and stopping every now and then, to rest, and admire the new and beautiful things which were strewn so thickly around their path. Fortunately for them, they came upon the party in the part of the

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field near a wood, so as they passed through the wood they approached them entirely unseen; and Norman, secreting himself behind a tree, and pulling Hope after him, tried to call their attention by imitating, as well as he could, some of the sounds with which Mr. Brosseau had been amusing them. They could see the party, who were clustered pretty near together; the younger ones being tired, had seated themselves under a tree, and Winny and the Frenchwoman kept near them; Winny, from fear of another bear suddenly making its appearance, and Mrs. Brosseau for company. Grace had become tired very early in the day, and had done but little beside lying down with her ankle upon a bunch of very soft moss, which Louis had gathered for her, picking off the berries from the bushes which he kept constantly cutting and bringing to her. Louis, beside being a very kind-hearted, obliging boy, was fascinated, without knowing it, by Grace's beauty; there was nothing made him so happy as doing something for her.

When they first heard Norman's call in the imitation of a katy-did, Louis stopped and looked all about him, and then answered with even more correctness than his father. Norman did not know it was Louis, but supposed it was some real bird answering. Delighted with his success, he tried again, another bird, and again came back the same sounds. The next time, however, he ventured too much, instead of

an answer, there was a loud laugh, and Lou
out,—

"Halloo there, young fellow, you don't com
no how! Hark! this is the way." Then he c
and very bird-like and sweet it was. The chi
were filled with astonishment. "Who was th
what could it all mean?"

Louis said what was true, "He did not know at a
he knew no real, live bird ever made noise that way
but he would soon find out." So he darted off in the
direction from which the sound had come, and Maud
and Guy ran to Winny, Guy clamouring to be taken
up, and Maud hiding herself under Winny's large
apron. A laugh and shout from the wood, however,
soon dispelled all fears, and in a minute Louis came
back with Norman and Hope, and the two large
baskets of berries. Such a delightful little surprise as
it was, and such an enthusiastic reception as they met!
Hope thought it was the very pleasantest thing of all
that pleasant day. No one seemed so glad to see her
as Grace; for, to tell the truth, Grace had not been
truly happy since Hope left them in the morning. If
Hope was in the right, then she was most decidedly
in the wrong; and Grace, thoughtless as she generally
was, could not quite forget it, nor enter into the sport
with her usual light-heartedness. Every one missed
it in her. Winny thought it was because her ankle
was still lame and painful, and blamed herself so often

for having allowed her to come, that it really interfered quite seriously with her own enjoyment; and now, as an excuse for Winny's bringing the children at all, it must be said, that she had never looked upon the school in a serious manner. She thought, and supposed Mr. Evans did also, that it was only an innocent kind of amusement, devised to keep the children still, and out of mischief for part of the day. Taking them with her berrying answered the same purpose, with the additional recommendation of procuring the berries, and making them happy; as we know, it had not occurred to her to take them, until Grace had so eagerly proposed it, and then she saw no objection. Hope's return, she attributed more to her love of study than anything else, and she shook her head wisely and decidedly over "such old heads on young shoulders." Her reception of Hope now was quite characteristic,—

"Well now," she said, "so you have come, be ye. I should think so, a studying them 'ere eyes out of your head, when there are these wild berries asking you to pick um, as fast as they can. See here, now!" and Winny displayed her filled articles with much pride.

"But see here, Winny; and we didn't come till some time after dinner." Then Hope brought her basket full of much finer ones than Winny's best, and put them side by side.

"Well, if that 'ere don't beat everything. Where did you get them?"

"Over in the three-mile pasture, and Norman has about twice as many. See there!"

Norman brought his pail, and, true enough, there were twice as many as Hope had, and twice as many as any other one person had gathered of the party, who had been out so many more hours.

"You always worked like a trooper," was Winny's remark. "Now we have got enough for all the preserves and pies your ma will want these two years, and I think we had better be going along toward home.

But Norman explained to her that they were all to ride, and that Mr. Brosseau would call when he came back, so they could rest and enjoy themselves as much as they pleased until that time, and very soon they were lying in groups all around under the deep shade which the westering sun cast beneath the trees. There was so much to tell, and so much to hear, any one would have thought the children had been separated for a month. Hope was the happiest of them all. Do any of my young readers know why?

Mr. Brosseau came only too soon for every one but Winny, and the little French baby, who had become very tired of spending so many hours in one hole without her customary play-things; she began to fret, and if she could have spoken, would doubtless have said that the pleasantest sound to her to-day, was her father's voice. They could all ride, for the cart was

empty; and though they filled it up very well, the horses trotted off with as much unconcern as if they were only the corn they had just left; and Louis and his father amused them all with their imitative powers, during the ride, so that it was only too short; though they were so tired that when they were in the house and waiting for tea, Winny found it was an impatient, not too pleasant, blackberry party.


XII.—GRACE'S CONFLICT.

XII.

Grace's Conflict.

RACE was too tired the night after the blackberrying party to sleep. Her ankle pained her, her head ached, and mentally and physically she felt very uncomfortable. Hope, in a few minutes, after having thanked God for the many mercies and joys with which he had crowned her day, fell into that sweetest of all sleeps, the one which comes to a happy heart, a conscience at rest, and dear friends near. Grace thought it made her more restless and miserable to have Hope sleeping so soundly; she wished she was somewhere else, and not lying there beside her; she wished it was fair to waken her and make her talk a little; but these feelings passed as soon as they came, for Grace was too kind-hearted to indulge them long; indeed, everything else gradually gave place to a train of thoughts which had been in her mind very much of late, but which she had succeeded in banishing when she could busy herself with some occupation or amuse-

ment, but to-night—and it is for this very purpose that God often sends these still, wakeful nights—there was not a sound to distract her, and do her best to interest herself in something else, still back, as if held by an invisible hand, would come the one topic. It was, what *made* a person faithful and true? That Hope was so while she was not, was very obvious, but what made Hope so, wherein did the difference consist? Hope was no more willing to be kind and obliging than she was, when she *thought of it*, the only difference here that was not perhaps in her favour, was that Hope never seemed to forget a time or occasion for being kind, while she did; so Hope never forgot a lesson, while she had to get her repetition lessons quite as well as one she had never learned: this was something which could not be helped, their minds were made differently, and certainly she was not responsible for that. This comfortably disposed of, Grace next took up the subject of neatness. Hope was so much more orderly than she was. She always knew where her own things were, and very often those of all the others in the house, so that it was constantly, among the children, "Hope, where is" this, that, or the other, from morning till night. Grace was intending to be very honest with herself, therefore she confessed, and took not a little credit to herself for doing so, that Hope was, take her for all in all, much more orderly. "Cleanliness is next to godliness," said Grace to herself, involuntarily repeat-

ing a maxim she had written many times in her copy-book; perhaps it is because Hope is so clean that she is so good, who knows? I'll begin the very moment I get out of this bed to-morrow morning to put my drawers in order; and then there moved before Grace's open eyes, in the dark room, tumbled clothes, tossed into a drawer any way, only so as they are out of sight; boxes containing the oddest medley of every imaginable thing, writing desk with everything in it but stationery, work-box with such a collection of thread and rags, every reel with its end drawn out and tangled up with the ends of cloth, and her needles lining the bottom of the reticule much more than in her needle-book; for her thimble and scissors, she had them at the school room the last time she used them, she wondered if she had brought them home, or if they had fallen down into the dirt and were lost. "Oh, dear, if the morning only would come!" and Grace just at this point of her meditations lifted her head and looked out at the stars. How bright they were, and how distant and dark the sky looked, that was so blue and near in the day time, and then Grace tried to find some familiar constellations, anything to drive those neglected, unladylike premises of hers away. At last they went, but only to admit a more unpleasant topic of thought. Hope was so much more obedient than she ever was or could be; for example, take to-day, she had had no hesitation in going without leave and taking her whole school with her, if

she had done wrong herself she had made all the others but Hope do so too. Hope had gone back quietly, not to make herself appear better than the others, this Grace knew so well that, though it came into her mind, she put it resolutely away. Hope never did anything for show or praise. The idea of its being wrong had never once suggested itself to Grace until it was brought to mind by missing Hope.

Why did Hope always think of such things, and she never? She did not often disobey, if she remembered; but it was not an unusual thing for her to forget. Was this the same trait of mind that made her forget her lessons? She had not a doubt it was; there was a good deal of comfort in the thought, but what about the acts of wilful disobedience, like going with Louis and Oscar in search of the bear, when her father had expressly forbidden their going into the woods? Grace did not like to meet this question fairly for some time, but it was so very, very still to-night, she could not help it. Do you suppose Grace thought for a moment that God was in that stillness, and was talking with her, though no other ear could hear him? No; she did not think much about God to-night; she was at work with her own heart, and so busy there that she had no place for anything beside. A whole course of disobedience in little things came before her; reading longer than her father had given her leave, and books in secret which he had forbidden; walking on that

lame ankle when he had wished her to avoid bearing her weight upon it; eating things which he had pronounced unwholesome; deceiving him very often, sometimes by saying that which was not exactly true, sometimes by withholding the truth, hiding what she did not want him to see and know, pretending to do something which he had bade her do, when he came in sight. Was there no end to them, why would they all come back to-night? And then for her mother, why it seemed to Grace's awakened conscience as if she never minded her, always disobeyed and deceived her, and Hope never did, never! just the same before their sight or behind their back; just the same if they are going to know it or if they are not.

Grace was fast becoming unreasonable and unjust to herself; she was carrying her self-accusation too far, and making Hope a great deal too perfect; but Grace, we have not now to learn, was a child of extremes. Going on in this way a short time, Grace began to sob, and considering herself the worst sinner that ever lived, to pray; and so, sobbing and praying, she at last tired herself out, and fell asleep, not waking the next morning until so near time for school that she was obliged to hurry through her morning duties, and, without being able to carry out one of the good plans which she had formed, to leave everything for the future. There was one thing, however, which, having resolved upon, she did not suffer herself to forget, but watching for an

opportunity was soon able to accomplish, that was to have a long talk with Norman, and ask him to solve for her some of the points which she found it so difficult to understand; among them were these two which seemed to her of vital importance: what made such a difference between Hope and herself, and was not Hope sometimes unnecessarily "fussy and oldmaidish?"

A few evenings after the night just described, Grace saw Norman sitting down alone, at the door of the tool-house, where her father kept his carpenter's bench and tools; running eagerly towards him, she accosted him at once with, "Oh, Norman Evans, I am so glad to find you alone, I do want to have a good long talk with you dreadfully."

"Well, my lady, what now?" said Norman, looking up from the new hoe handle he was attempting to put in the place of the one he had broken the day before.

"Why do you always call me 'my lady,' or 'your ladyship,' or some such formal name, when you call Hope 'Birdie,' or 'little one,' or something that sounds as if you were fond of her?"

"Oh, that is what you want to talk with me about 'so dreadfully,' is it? Well, it would be rather difficult to answer you. I shall have to give you a girl's answer, ''cause.'"

"Who said that was a girl's answer?"

"Everybody that knows anything about women; they never reason, you know."

"Why don't they?"

"You must ask some one who is wiser than I am, if you want to know; inferiority of the sex, and so forth, I suppose; but is this all, for if it is, it is not worth stopping my carpentering for?"

"No, it has nothing at all to do with it; I wanted to talk with you about, about—" Grace was obviously becoming confused, so she stopped. Norman, instead of helping her, said roguishly, "Well, 'about' is a very original subject; what about 'about.'"

"Do be sober, Norman, I am sure I am; what is the great difference between Hope and I?"

"Why," said Norman, gravely, "you are tall, Hope is short; you are slim, Hope is dumpy; you have blue eyes and twisted hair, Hope has eyes never twice the same colour, and hair as black and straight as an Indian's; you are fair complexioned with here and there a freckle; Hope is dark, and as smooth and clear as an Italian; for the rest, just get two looking-glasses and decide for yourself."

"Nonsense, Norman, I didn't mean how we look; but what makes us act so differently?"

"Now you come to a very important matter," said Norman, suddenly becoming grave.

"Yes, I know it is; I lay awake a whole night trying to think it out, and didn't come any nearer it in the end."

"Are you serious, Grace?"

"Sober as a judge, Norman; it is all a puzzle to me;" and Grace, having overcome the first obstacles, and being fairly launched upon the theme, repeated her experiences of the wakeful night, to all of which Norman listened silently, but with fixed attention; when she had finished, he said, "Grace, the whole thing after all lies in a nutshell; Hope is faithful in the most minute things, and that makes her true, obedient, obliging, kind, and, as the Bible says, 'of good report.'"

"I know all that, but what *makes* her faithful and true—how can she be? she don't seem to try, she does it naturally."

"Don't you believe that, Grace! Don't you suppose it cost Hope anything the day she left you all to go on a pleasure party, and she returned alone to her books?"

"I don't know; she needn't have done it, if she had not wished. Father only said to me he would rather I would not go away again without his permission. I don't think he was but a very little displeased, not enough to feel sorry for."

"But he was very much pleased with Hope, enough to feel very glad of, and that I am sure is the better of the two."

"Well, yes, I suppose it is; but after all, Norman, it seems not worth losing an afternoon's fun for."

"There, now, you have it," said Norman, throwing down his hoe; "nothing is ever too small for Hope to

be faithful in, the smaller the thing, it has sometimes seemed to me, the more exact and particular she is."

"That's what I call being fussy and oldmaidish."

"'Fussy and oldmaidish!' I have heard you call her so a hundred times, and I wonder at you, Grace."

"Why, you see, Norman, it is so much like old Aunt Debby, that used to come to sew for us in Castleford; she was enough to try the patience of a whole family of Jobs. Mother always had such a 'nervous turn' after she had been at work at our house, you remember it as well as I do. Well, the reason of all was, she was so mighty faithful in every little bit of a nonsensical thing; every stripe and every plaid must match just so; every bit of trimming in precisely its right place; and as for a wrinkle in the dress anywhere, next to a long stitch, it would set her sooner into hysterics than anything else. Then it was plod, plod, plod along, until it seemed as if it would kill everybody who was in the least hurry; and father used to say it was worth while to have patience with her, she was so faithful."

"What has Aunt Debby to do with Hope?"

"Oh, it seems to me often, Hope's faithfulness is pretty much the same thing; she is a great stickler for trifles. Do you know she never will go to bed, no matter how tired she is, without folding up all her clothes and putting them in a pile on the chair, just because father told her, he wanted her to be very careful and form neat habits in those things in which no

one could watch her; she is full of such quips and quirks, and I say they are downright oldmaidish."

"How is it with your clothes when you go to bed?"

"Oh!" and Grace laughed very merrily. "I jump right out of them, and leave them in such a funny little, round ring on the floor; they look just like a girl making cheeses, only the head is gone; but if Hope is up she is sure to put them all away nicely."

"Well, you call that not being oldmaidish or fussy, I suppose. Are you faithful in following out father's request?"

"That's just what I want to talk about. You don't suppose, now, he means to have me do as Hope does, and that when I don't do it I am wrong?"

"I suppose he means just what he says; that he wants you to be careful and never do a thing, the tendency of which would be to make you grow up with careless habits. You say you leave your clothes on the floor, and you think it's foolish in Hope not to do so too. Now, whose drawers and boxes and baskets look best?"

"Hope's, a hundred times, they are like old Mrs. Miller's wax work."

"That is in consequence of Hope's folding up her clothes at night."

"Now, don't be foolish, Norman; how little you know about it: I should just like to see any connection."

"Here it is, then. Hope acquires by her carefulness in little things habits of care; the same habits make her from necessity neat, tidy, wax-work, as you call it, everywhere and at all times; the same thing makes you just the opposite."

Grace pouted a little; she could blame herself, but she did not like to allow the same privilege to others.

"That is not but half the reason after all," she said, "I forget, and Hope never does. Now, I *mean* to tidy my drawers, to put everything in its place, but it slips out of my mind, and if it's out, why it's gone. I should like to know if I am responsible for that?"

"Just as responsible as if your memory was the best that ever was made."

"You are a very foolish boy, Norman; if God had made me lame, should I be blamed for limping?"

"I suppose you mean to say, if God has not given you memory, should you be to blame for not using it?"

"Yes; I do mean just that," said Grace, triumphantly.

"Look here, Grace; do you know that if God made your two feet precisely alike, and one of them you had never used, or if you did, had turned and twisted it in some unnatural way; that you would have been lame, just as truly so as if he had made one foot a club foot or turned the foot in?"

"I suppose so."

"In that case, who would be responsible for the lame foot, you, or your Maker?"

"Why I, of course."

"Well, it's just so with your mind; God gave you as much memory as he did Hope, but instead of using it you have let it lie by until it has become lame, like the unused limb, and now you turn and say, how can I help it, God never made me to remember as he did Hope."

"Do you mean to say that my memory is as good as Hope's?"

"I mean simply and only to say, that so far as your being able to be as extremely and minutely faithful as Hope, it is, and that God will hold you as responsible for every act of forgetfulness as he will her."

Grace was silent for a moment; then she said: "But it comes so often; now if it was only once a week, or once a month, that there was some great act of faithfulness to be performed, it would be good fun, and I could do it as well as not; but, dear me, Hope is always at work at it. She begins the moment she opens her eyes in the morning by jumping right up, because father likes to have us up and out in the fresh air before breakfast, while I do love that half awake, half asleep morning nap better than the whole night beside."

"Even if to have it, you must disobey your father."

"Don't call things such hard names, Norman; father never said I mustn't have it, in my life."

"But can you get up and dress yourself, and go out, while you are having that beautiful morning nap?"

"No, I am no sleep-walker, but it don't matter, it is a very little thing. I declare, Norman, sometimes it is so very funny to see Hope jump up three-fourths asleep; she can't get her eyes open until she gets her head into a basin of cold water, and then she makes such queer faces sometimes, they make me broad awake."

"Dear faithful little Birdie," said Norman, "how I wish there were any of the rest of us who were half as good."

"I wish so too, Norman;" and Grace's voice sounded very sincere. "I would give anything to be like her."

"Like all the rest of us, Grace, anything but the sacrifices necessary, like losing that morning nap. There is one thing we may set down as sure and certain to start with, it is not by any great thing that is to come once a month or once a week, but by things which come every day, and every hour in the day, that we are to become faithful and true."

"If I only could go on a pilgrimage somewhere, I would start right off this very hour, and I would be willing to go a good part of the way with peas in my shoes," said Grace, half laughing.

"Ah, Grace! a pilgrimage to the shrine of Loretto, Mecca, or even Jerusalem wouldn't help yon; not even if you put a bushel of peas in each shoe."

"I know that, or I should have been off long ago.

Only think, Norman, if we could become good—really Christians, I mean—by any such way, what troops of people would be for starting off every time their consciences troubled them."

"And how many of them would find their consciences grow very easy as soon as they began to be tired, or met an obstacle of any kind."

"I wouldn't," and Grace drew herself up quite like a heroine, "I can assure you. No lions by the way would frighten me; the more the better."

"And yet these little home faithfulnesses that require nothing but self-control, self-forgetfulness, are so mighty that they conquer you, without even an effort on your part."

"They are so little, I don't see them."

"That is the way Satan cheats older and wiser heads than yours, Grace. It is so small it is unworthy the attempt; and all the while it is a link, the stronger for being small, in the chain that is drawing you away from God and all good things."

"But if you can't, you can't."

"Be honest with yourself, Grace; or rather be faithful with yourself."

"What will come next, if I have to be faithful with myself and with everybody else? I may as well give up first as last. I should like to know how I am to go to work to do that."

"In this way. You know by all these get-offs, like

'if I can't, I can't,' you are trying to find an excuse for going on and doing just as you please. You would like to be happy; and if you can only convince yourself that you are right, you will be. Now, this I call being unfaithful to yourself, Grace Evans. Suppose a friend wanted to do something very much which was wrong—"

"Which was not just exactly right," interrupted Grace, "and only the tiniest bit in the world wrong—"

"There is no such thing; an act must be always right or wrong. What does the Bible say? 'He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.' That means, that there is no such thing as not exactly right, and only a little wrong."

"Well, what about the friend?"

"Suppose your friend came to you, and asked your opinion, really wanting to be helped and guided by you, and, after thinking it over, you should see very plainly that it would make her the happiest for the present to do just what she wanted to; and so you should find every excuse you could for her, and help her do the wrong action: do you think you should be faithful to her?"

"No, not exactly; but would she like me all the better?"

"Very probably she might for the time; but suppose some very serious consequences should result from the course she took, and she should come to you when she

was suffering from them, and ask if you were faithful to her, and really advised her for what you thought would be her best good?"

"Then I suppose I should have to speak out and say the truth."

"Be sure of one thing, Grace; it is better to act the truth in the beginning, and it is just the same with your trying to find all manner of excuses for not following Hope's example now. By and by you will feel that you have brought a great many evil things upon yourself."

"I wonder if Hope wouldn't watch over me, and give me a pull every time she saw I was slipping, if I asked her?" said Grace, by way of reply.

"Now, Grace, if you really are desirous to learn to be as faithful and trusty as Hope, don't begin by depending upon anybody but yourself."

"Father would say that 'myself' was the very weakest support in the world; that I ought to depend upon God and the Holy Spirit."

"So you should, Grace; but you know very well God never helps any one, nor his Spirit either, who does not help himself; and it seems to me you are not in earnest in this matter; you are too eager to find excuses."

"If I had not been in earnest, I should not have taken the pains to talk with you, Norman."

Norman felt reproved and troubled. If Grace was

really awake to her faults, and had sought advice from him, how necessary it was it should be given with the utmost judgment! Norman never felt his own dependence for guidance aud instruction more; and as the two children sat there in the gathering twilight, he prayed as he had never prayed before, a prayer for aid. It was only "the upward glancing of an eye;" but who shall doubt that God was there watching and ready to hear?

Before they had time for any further conversation, they heard the voices of the other children calling them, and pretty soon the whole company, including Louis and Rosette, came hurrying towards them.

Louis had found a beautiful grey squirrel in the woods, and had succeeded in taking it alive. He had put it into a small cage with a wire wheel to turn, and there was the animal turning it away with all the ease and swiftness which one would have supposed could only have been acquired by long training. Of course it was a great wonder and amusement to the children, and very soon, in watching it, Grace forgot her newly awakened regrets, and Norman could not help thinking, as he looked at her, how giddy and thoughtless she really was, and how necessary to her, if she was ever to make a consistent, truly valuable Christian, were some of the more sedate and reliable traits so conspicuous in his "little Birdie;" but he was too sensible a boy to suppose any radical change was to take place

in a day. He knew that, to be thorough, it must be the work of time. "By their fruits shall ye know them." He determined to be more watchful over his sister, who, to say the truth, had never seemed to him within his reach before, and while he took every opportunity to incite and strengthen her in doing what was right, to pray often and earnestly for her. Norman made this resolution, without knowing that in this way he would advance and mature his own Christian character. The principle had never been pointed out to him, that in spiritual as in temporal things we grow by giving, and that to bear another often and fervently to the mercy-seat is the surest method of finding the ear that never wearies ready to hear and grant a request for oneself—making true the promise of the text which says, "And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do those things which are well pleasing in his sight."

Grace, however, was not so wholly forgetful as Norman had feared. She thought often not only that night, but for days and weeks afterwards, of what he had said. God blessed to her the impression which he had wished to make of the necessity of faithfulness in little things, and Grace watched Hope with an eager and curious eye as all unconsciously she went about the homely, every-day duties of her life.

XIII.—SABBATH AT GLENBURN.

XIII.

Sabbath at Glenburn.

WE have as yet said nothing of the Sabbaths which the Evans' family passed at their new home of Glenburn. They were, as we have before mentioned, ten miles from any village, and consequently from any church; and this, with the absence of weekly schools, had been Mr. Evans' greatest objection to bringing his family to the Green Mountains. He determined to observe his Sabbath with even more strictness and regularity than he would if he had continued to live at Castleford; and, by dint of much exertion, he had been able, thus far, to do so. He had read a sermon every morning and afternoon to his assembled family, and as Mrs. Evans possessed a fine voice, and showed more taste for and interest in music than in almost anything else, they had had singing and exercises so nearly resembling those held in the sanctuary, that Winny, with tears of joy in her eyes, had often declared "they were the most precious

seasons of her life." Norman was Sabbath school superintendent, teacher, and everything else; and as the French children proved so little trouble in the week-day school, and improved so rapidly, Norman wished them to join his Sabbath school. To this their parents, although they were Catholics, made no objection. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether they had any idea what a Sabbath school was, or what was taught in it.

So much pains did their father, mother, and Norman take to make the day pleasant to them, that the children thought it the most delightful of the seven, and everything dated from it. It was either "so long to the Sabbath," or "so many days since the Sabbath;" and their obvious enjoyment of it was one of the bright spots in Mr. Evans' hard life. It was not a day of rest to him, in a literal sense, but it was a day when he could be with his family, when he could meet their wants, guide and direct them spiritually, and the souls of these children, far more than their bodies, seemed to Mr. Evans to be the great responsibility which God had given him. He was more afraid of their crying for spiritual bread, and his giving them a stone, than of even the temporal necessities which he had seen pressing hard upon them.

By and by, from coming constantly to Sabbath school, the French children began to drop now and then into the kitchen, the largest room in the house, during the Sunday service; and though they obviously

thought the sermon a dull affair, during which Etta commonly went to sleep, still the singing was new and pleasant to them, and after hearing the tunes a few times, Louis would join with the others, with the sweet, clear voice so peculiar to boys. Winny, finding the children made such quiet members of the congregation, asked Mrs. Brosseau to come in, and accordingly she made her appearance with the baby and Rosette, both of whom behaved remarkably well, particularly the baby, who sat with its thumb in its mouth, staring from one to the other, and making no more disturbance than if it understood the whole thing.

The only anxiety that Mr. Evans felt as time passed by, and the observance of the Sabbath under these circumstances became an institution, was for the time which, do his best, must remain upon the children's hands unemployed. There were long hours in the after part of the day, when service and Sabbath school were both over they had nothing to do. This time, in Castleford, those who could read had generally employed with the Sabbath school books, but now they had no such library of which to avail themselves, and the Sunday books which they owned they had read and re-read, until they knew them almost by heart. Here, too, everything was so tempting out of doors. Weeds in the flower garden were never more conspicuous, never found little hands more willing to pull them than when the flowers which grew in the great moun-

tain garden were beyond their reach; and never did the shaded paths leading away to those lovely little nooks look more invitingly. It seemed as if the woods had many voices calling to the children to "come out and play," that were silent in other and noisier days. The very fish in the clear brooks, as if they knew that it was the Sabbath, and they were safe, came to the surface and looked with their great eyes into the eager young faces that looked down upon them, and turned over in the bright warm sun their glossy sides, all sparkling with gold and silver. Oh, these lovely Sabbath days! God made them beautiful within and without, that these young people might learn to love them, and through them, love Him, their giver. Mr. Evans did not attempt to restrict these children to a quiet in-doors life, as he had in Castleford. He said to them, "I wish you all to be very careful to 'remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.' Those of you who are old enough to set a good example to the younger, will remember that you have a double responsibility." This was all he said, and it was all Norman and Hope needed. For the others, it is very doubtful whether a more stringent method would have done any more. But Norman was very watchful. He took it upon himself to be particularly so after the conversation we have recorded in the last chapter. He seldom allowed either Grace or Oscar to be long out of his sight; and as he took every pains to make them happy with him,

they had no desire to be away. Hope generally devoted the leisure hours of the day to Maud and Guy, telling them Bible stories, teaching them good hymns, of which she knew a great number. Rich jewels they were, stored carefully away for a day of darkness, sorrow, and want; and then, in the twilight, they all gathered in their mother's room, and sang these same hymns with her. For an hour on every Sabbath night, she was in reality a mother; and this was one other way God took to make them love the day.

Mr. Evans occasionally went to the village of Grafton on communion Sunday. When Mrs. Evans was not able to go, he took two of his children, and the occasion was always one of great pleasure to them. There was the long drive, the social worship, the pleasant intercourse with a few acquaintances, and not unfrequently the invitation of the pastor to them to go home with him during the short intermission. It so happened, not many weeks after Grace's attention had especially wakened to a consciousness of her own wrong doing, that both Norman and Hope were to accompany her father, and this would of necessity leave her at home with the care of the family. It had been done at Norman's suggestion. He thought Grace very confident that the reformation which she had wished to commence was completed; and though in many things there had been a decided improvement, yet she was not, to other eyes at least, quite perfect. Norman

wanted she should have an opportunity to test herself, without any one near to exert a restraining or guiding influence. She was to conduct the Sabbath school as usual, and in the place of the sermon she was to read a Sabbath school book to the children. It seemed delightful to think of, to a child who would have liked some new thing every day of her life; and Grace watched the others leave for Grafton with scarcely a wish to accompany them. As soon as the waggon was out of sight, she determined to pick some flowers and put them in the kitchen, to make it look cheerful to her young audience; and very soon, with Maud and Guy by her side, she was as busy as if it had been a week day; for there were so many, and so very, very beautiful, that, having once begun, she would never have known when to stop, if she had not been arrested by Winny calling her, in no very gentle tones—

"Now if that 'ere ain't up to it, I never know'd anything that was; picking posies on the Lord's day?"

"Well," said Grace, suddenly dropping her apronful, "I hope you don't think there is anything wicked in picking a flower."

"Not if you just wanted one or so to put in your button-hole, when you was a-going to meeting; I shouldn't think no more of that, than of picking a bunch of fennel, or cumfrey, or caraway, that I know on; but to pick a bushel on um! I wonder, Grace Evans, if you will ever larn to be trusty; them children

now haven't done no sich thing afore, since they have been at Glenburn, and your father will feel terribly when he hears on't. Come right in, now, every one of ye, as quick as ye can!"

Now there were several things about this address which did not please Grace. She wanted her flowers. She didn't like to be told that she was not to be trusted, nor that she had done anything which would make her father "feel terribly," and most of all, she disliked to have Winny do what she called "ordering her." Now her blood was boiling through her veins at the peremptory address, and, stamping her foot upon the ground, she said,—

"Winny Dole, do you go back into the kitchen, and let us alone. I can take care of the children and myself too without your interference."

Now a patient temper was no more a virtue of Winny's than it was of Grace; and for an instant Winny was angry; so she said, very sharply,—

"Don't you sarse me, Grace Evans. If you don't come right into the house, and throw every one of them posies away, I'll bring you."

"You'll bring me! I should like to see you! I guess you forget, Winny Dole, what day it is, or you wouldn't stand there screaming so that they might hear you down at Grafton. You just mind your own business, and go back till you get into a frame more fitting this holy day. I should think it would be as well as lec-

turing me about picking a little simple flower. I wonder which God would think the worst."

"Dear lamb," said Winny, and there was no longer a tone of shrillness to her trembling voice, "old Winny forgets herself now and then; God forgive her; yes, it is far worse than picking a whole houseful of posies;" and Grace heard a sort of half sob, as Winny turned back into the kitchen and shut the door.

"I can't stand that anyhow," said Grace, her anger as quickly over as it was excited. Before Winny had time to wipe the tears out of her eyes, which she was busy doing with the corner of her apron, two arms were thrown tightly around her neck, and a loving voice said, close to her ear,—

"Dear, darling old Winny, I am just as sorry as can be, and if you won't mind it, I'll come right in, and—and—why I'll sit down here on the footstool, and read the Bible to you all day long; I'll begin at Genesis, first chapter, first verse, and I'll read to the very end of Revelation, Deuteronomy, Exodus, hard names and all; there now, say you forgive me!"

"You ain't nothing to blame so much as I am," said Winny, hugging and kissing the child, with so much force that Grace felt as if she were in an iron vice. "I should think I might be old enough now to keep a guard upon my lips; the Lord forgive me, I am a poor, weak, miserable old sinner arter all."

"Dear, good, precious Winny, don't call yourself any

more names. I am a young reprobate, I know I am; and it isn't any use, Winny. I never can be any better; now to-day, of all days, when father trusted me so much, and I meant to be just the best child that ever lived—why, Winny Dole, I shouldn't wonder at all, if you hadn't come out to stop me, if some more of those big black bears had walked out of the woods and eaten us all up, not leaving so much as even the stem of one of those flowers I was so wicked as to pick. Now you see if there ever was a better girl than I shall be all the rest of the day. It is almost time for meeting to begin; and we will set out the chairs, and mamma shall come in and sing, and you shall pray, Winny, and we will have it all as nice as can be."

Grace flew about with as much real play in her, if she had but known it, while she was getting ready for the meeting, as there had been while she was picking the flowers. The three children, Oscar, Maud, and Guy, who had never left her for a moment, but had passed through every grade of her feelings, though in a less degree, now ran about calling so noisily that their mother came out to see what was the occasion of so much disturbance. She was immediately seized by the party, and partly pulled and partly coaxed into the large chair, where she was to act the part of chorister. She exerted what authority she had to quiet the children and make them feel that it was Sunday; and Louis coming in with Etta, Grace took her father's

place, and after two or three attempts to imitate him, which made the children laugh, and called forth a rebuke from her mother, she became interested in the story she was reading, so did all the others, and an hour passed quite like the Sabbath day. Then the younger ones began to yawn and show that they were tired, so Grace stopped, and the singing came in with great zest, Winny's voice, which was somewhat bass, answering the purpose of the father's.

In the afternoon Oscar was not to be found, when Winny rung the bell to call them together. Grace had forgotten him, though she had been quite faithful in keeping Maud and Guy within sight; but now where was Oscar? To run to Louis's house was Grace's first movement. He had been there, but had gone away with Louis full half an hour ago. Louis would come back, he wanted to know the end of the story too much to stay away, of this Grace felt quite sure, so she went home comforted, and commenced the exercises with singing, but put off the reading, expecting every moment to hear the boys coming home. But it was of no use; her mother was tired singing so much; the children clamoured for the story, and Grace was obliged to begin, though she did so very reluctantly, and more interested in listening and looking for the boys than in the pages of the book in her hand. The story was at last finished, the long afternoon passed, and the children did not come; for the first time in her life Grace knew what it

was to feel really anxious and troubled for another's fault. She walked restlessly about in every direction, ran a few steps up one of the paths leading to the woods, then returned and ran a few steps up another, went every half hour to the French house, but all in vain; it was nearly time for her father to return, and what should she tell him, how could she meet him, without Oscar? Grace, as we well know, magnified what was wrong as well as what was right, and as soon as her mind fixed on what her father would consider, she felt sure, her great unfaithfulness, she became so unhappy and so self-condemning that she hardly knew how to bear it. It was of no use to tell Winny, for she was as troubled as she was herself; so after sitting down for some time on the front steps with her face covered with her hands, rocking to and fro as if she was overwhelmed by a great sorrow, very much to the alarm of Maud and Guy, she started up, told them to stay where they were without moving an inch from the spot until she returned, and without bonnet or cape ran as swiftly as her weak ankle would allow, in the direction in which she hoped every moment to meet her father. Perfectly reckless of anything else but seeing him, she took no notice of the objects which might have kept her in the right path; but on she went until, wearied and very much alarmed, she found the road, instead of leading down into the open fields of the Otter Creek valley, suddenly diverge into the woods, and be-

come only a rough cart path. There was no occasion for a moment's doubt that she had lost her way, and that nothing remained but for her to retrace her steps as quickly as she could; but in the meantime where would her father be; suppose he should reach home and find her gone as well as Oscar, what would he think, and what, after her former disobedience in the matter of the bear hunt, would he have a perfect right to think? Grace tried to run, but it was of no use; her foot grew very painful; she felt sure she could never reach home again alone; she wanted to sit down, to lie down, to do anything but drag on that slow weary way. "Oh, if I had always been faithful and true like Hope," she said aloud, "it wouldn't matter much now; they would know something unusual had happened, and they would all come out to find me, and be so sorry for what I have suffered;" then Grace cried in hearty earnest, great girl as she was; but it did not do her any good; it only made her feel the more weary, and as if it was impossible to walk another step. She sat down for a few minutes to rest, but this would make matters worse; the sooner she was home the better, and making what she thought was a final exertion, she succeeded in coming once more in sight of the house. There was no one stirring; perhaps, after all, her father had been detained and was not yet home! She walked cautiously round to the kitchen door and looked in, it was empty, and oh, so still. She crept through and went into the din-

ing-room, there was the supper table; a glance told her that the party from Grafton had returned; where could they be? At this moment she caught the sound of her father's voice in prayer; she moved toward the door of the room from which it came, and stood still. He was praying for her, and he called her "that dear child who could not resist temptation, who was continually straying from the strait and narrow way, who was the source of so many anxieties and fears." Grace could not bear any more; with a loud cry of pain she pushed open the door, and going in knelt by her father's side in her accustomed place. He knew the voice, but only paused a moment, and then in words no less touching than those she had first listened to, continued to pray for her, Grace all the time sobbing aloud.

When the prayer was ended, he took her hand between his, and said, soothingly,—

"My child, what does all this mean?"

"I did not mean to do so very, very wrong, father. Oscar went away this noon, and I was so troubled, I went to meet and tell you, and lost my way; that is all, indeed it is."

"I believe you, Grace; sit down, be quiet, and tell me when and how Oscar went. He is not back yet."

Grace could not tell the when and how; all she knew was that Oscar had gone, and that she had been so miserable for fear her father would think her unfaithful.

She then growing every minute more and more calm

as she made confession, proceeded to tell her father of all that had occurred since he left, rather exaggerating her own blame in the morning affair of the flower-gathering, than attempting to make it any less; while, all the time, Winny, who had remained a spectator of the scene, was bearing her witness to Grace's good behaviour, excepting in the one matter of going for so many flowers, and repeating how she too had forgotten herself, and the blessed Sabbath day.

Mr. Evans saw Grace was in no frame of mind to be benefited by any conversation on the subject; so with a few words of forgiveness and affection he sent her to bed, promising to listen to all she had to say at another time. Hope went with her, to comfort her, and bathe the swollen, aching foot; but to all Grace's passionate exclamations of penitence and resolutions to do and be better for the future, she could only say,—

"Pray, Gracy, pray! Jesus will help you; I know he will."

And then she told her of the sermon she had heard that morning in Grafton on the preciousness of Christ; and as the child talked, something of his saving, forgiving love seemed to shed itself over the heart of the sorrowing Grace, and she prayed earnestly, sincerely, as she had never prayed before.

Norman had wished Grace's resolutions tested, that she might have less self-confidence, or in other words might be more sincere in them; he could not but feel

the utmost sympathy for her, when he found how heart-broken she was. He was afraid that he had not been at pains enough to understand the character of this sister; and a gentler, tenderer spirit came into the boy's heart; he would do more for her, if God would again give him such an opportunity as he was almost afraid he had now lost.

It grew very late that night, and Oscar did not return. Mr. Brosseau had been away himself all day, and when he came home, he said he had seen nothing of either of the boys; but going to look after Crantz for the night, he found him too gone. Louis occasionally took him without leave, but as no accident had ever happened to him, and he was quite an experienced horseman, the Frenchman felt sure they had driven to some of the villages near, and been unexpectedly detained; the idea of harm, to either boys or horse, he was not disposed to entertain for a moment. He went in and went quietly to bed, his greatest anxiety being lest they should overdrive the horse, so that he would not be in a good condition for hard work to-morrow.

Mr. Evans and Norman were not able to follow his example; and yet there was nothing they could do before the next morning; so when it came to a late hour Mr. Evans insisted that Norman should go to his bed, while he waited. Norman very reluctantly obeyed, and Mr. Evans saw hour after hour pass until the day dawned, without any further intelligence of his son.

Just after daybreak, Mr. Brosseau, who was an early riser, came in to say, that as the horse was not yet home, he should start for it on the Hampton road; he had heard there were to be some cock-fights there the day before, and as Louis was very fond of them, he had little doubt they had gone to see them; perhaps had lamed the horse, or broken the cart, so they could not or dared not return. Mr. Brosseau was very angry, and carried in his hand a curiously twisted birch stick, such as the mountaineers use for whips, with their cattle. This he shook threateningly several times, saying he wanted nothing better than to try it on the boy's back. Mr. Evans knew that occasionally he did punish Louis very severely, he tried to moderate his anger now, but at every attempt the Frenchman broke out into fresh threatenings, so that he wisely forbore, and left Louis to his fate. As he knew the places where the boys would be likely to be, very much better than either Mr. Evans or Norman, they decided it was best to entrust Oscar to him, Mr. Evans charging him in case anything serious had happened, to let him know without delay.

Toward noon they heard the sound of the Frenchman's waggon coming down the road. This they knew directly, for never were wheels less musical, or a rickety cart more inclined to groan in every loose board. Mr. Evans went to meet it, and there was Mr. Brosseau with Louis and Oscar, a broken cart, and a lame horse.

Louis' face was scarred and swollen; the birch rod had evidently done its work. Mr. Brosseau looked red and angry, and Oscar pale and frightened, but evidently safe from any further harm. The story was soon told. The boys had, as Louis' father thought, gone to Hampton to see the cock-fight, and taken Crantz and the waggon in order to return before either of their fathers should reach home, but they left Crantz just outside of the village; he had broken his fastening, when he thought he had waited patiently long enough, ran away over a broken and rough road, overset the waggon, and fallen himself. Some one had found him who knew both horse and waggon, and had seen Louis at the cock-fight. He took him to a safe place, but said nothing to the boys, thinking they had run away, and determining to give them a fright which would teach them better for the future; and a fright sure enough it was, when, after staying much longer than they had intended, fascinated with the wicked amusements of the place, they hurried to the spot where they had left him, and found that he was gone. It was not until a late hour that they obtained any information of him, then he was lamed, and the cart so broken up it could not be driven until it had been mended. The boys obtained permission to sleep the rest of the night in the barn where the horse was. And it may easily be imagined what kind of a night they passed. Oscar, with his thoughts of home, and Louis, with his dread of the punishment which he

knew would be waiting for him, if any injury had happened to Crantz or the cart; for the cock-fight, his father had taken him to too many to make him dread any blame for that; but to hurt his horse could not be so easily forgiven.

Mr. Evans lifted Oscar out—indeed, the boy was so frightened that he had very little power to help himself—and in perfect silence led him towards the house.

Mr. Brosseau offered him his birch stick, pointing to Louis' disfigured face, as a proof of how well it could be made to do this work, but Mr. Evans said, "Thank you; that is something I never use. My boys must yield to another course of discipline."

"It's very good though," said the Frenchman; "he (pointing to Louis), he won't need anything more for six months, and yours will need it every day."

Poor Oscar! he did seem to need it "every day." What could he do for him? He was just in the state when persuasions and light punishments seem to be thrown entirely away, and this last experience had taught Mr. Evans that he could not be trifled with. If Mr. Evans wished, as he took Oscar to his room and left him there, that he could have consulted with his mother, as to what was best for their child, it was not the only instance of his feeling the need of a help-mate in the education of his children; as it was, he must look to his God and the good influences which he hoped from Norman and Hope. It was perfectly unnecessary to

say to either of them, that he wished them to help him; he saw by their troubled faces, that they were already thinking and planning with him, and that night, after he had left Oscar in his room, having talked and prayed with him, he saw Hope going softly in, with her little Bible in her hand, and stopping to listen, he heard her reading to him the story of the prodigal son, endeavouring to explain and enforce whatever seemed to apply to the truant boy.

XIV.—AUTUMN ON THE MOUNTAINS.

XIV.

Autumn on the Mountains.

THE autumn days were now beginning perceptibly to shorten. The morning hours were dark and cold, and the twilight so short at night, that lamp-light seemed almost immediately to succeed that of the day. Grace's school had changed from the arbour which the chill winds had found as well as the children, back into the corn-barn, and even before that was needed for grain, it was too cold for their use; so the dining-room, very much to Winny's annoyance, was appropriated to them, and there the children assembled with as much punctuality as ever. Grace became more and more fond of her work, thanks to Hope's faithful co-operation, and was a far better teacher in the dining-room than she had ever been before. Louis, since his journey away on the Sabbath to see the cock-fight, had not been considered by Mr. Evans as a safe companion for his children even in the school-room, and his father had taken him to work in

the harvest-field, where plenty was now always found for him to do. Oscar, too, was taken from school, whenever he could be profitably and constantly employed; and so Grace's cares were lighter, and in some respects easier; though, it must be confessed, she missed the pleasant face, and the bright, quick recitations of the French boy. Occasionally, when there was anything which the girls could do, and the day was fine, Mr. Evans would break up the school and take them all out. The days of gathering apples were perfect holidays; and they proved, too, very efficient help in picking up potatoes, though to this Grace rather objected, as not being sufficiently lady-like. Then, there came hours of nutting, when Louis was allowed to go with them and carry them all, with Crantz, who soon recovered from his lameness, and was "better than ever." Days, too, when the whole woods seemed ablaze with a sudden blossoming of tree and shrub, when the children were allowed to wander for hours picking the bright leaves, and were, one and all, born into a world of gorgeous beauty of which they had never dreamed before. Such rare and large collections as they made each day, now when the morning sun shone full upon them from those on the west side of the woods, when every tree seemed suddenly transformed into a flower-garden; and then again, in the evening, on the east side, where, by some marvellous change the garden had shifted, and was full of even greater joy than its opposite rival. These

glorious, golden, autumn days, brought even Mrs. Evans out from her room, the debility of summer had passed, the rich, plentiful harvest, which had rewarded her husband's patient toil, seemed to promise freedom from care in a generous abundance. The children were so happy and so good, really these days were very unclouded ones in Mrs. Evans' troubled life; perhaps, after all, she was going to realize those golden dreams which had come down to her from her father. Quiet, and easily pleased, the children were always happy to have her with them, and, as she admired gay autumn leaves quite as much as they did, coaxed and petted her into going with them on quite a number of short excursions.

How bright and cheerful the home became now! it almost seemed as if the tinted leaves, which wreathed it everywhere, imparted some of their brilliancy to the dark autumnal days and made them sunlighted. Even in the evening, they glowed and shone in the bright homelight, like drapery of gold and crimson,—and little fingers twined them into gorgeous wreaths, and little people wore them for crowns and sashes, and bound them over their happy hearts, like shoulder-bands, and clasped them for bracelets over their white arms; pinned them for trimmings on their dark, full dresses, and lost them in the folds of their curling hair. Even Winny could not escape; she cooked and washed and ironed, with great red bunches of the

largest and brightest leaves that could be found, pinned on everywhere that a pin could be made to hold, she, good soul, submitting most patiently, "'cause it was only the children, pretty dears;" while Grace always whispered to Hope, "Don't she look now, for all the world, like a real Indian squaw?"

Corn husking, too, was a great event, when they were all taken out to the big barn, and seated upon the hay-mows, and those long ears of yellow corn made to come out from the brown pile before them; even little Guy could help, and learned his arithmetic-lesson in the best arithmetic ever written, by counting his ears every day. Then there followed all the wonders of threshing and winnowing, of which Oscar and Guy never tired. If the summer had its pleasures, so it seemed to the children had the autumn in even a greater degree, and if these two seasons were so delightful, what would the winter be, with its deep snows, so deep that they would make forts and castles, so Louis told them, and even dig out houses under the banks, where they could go and have the best of all times. The skating, too, when the pond was frozen two feet thick, and as clear and bright as glass, when they could keep a good roaring fire on it to warm their hands and feet, and broil the pickerel which Louis said would almost swim into it of their own accord to get warm, to say nothing of the grand coasting down the cleared mountain sides, and the sleigh rides, where

horses and sleigh could go right over the tops of the fences and never know they were there.

They were accustomed to the pinching cold of a New England climate; surely a few degrees, more or less, would make very little difference to them, and so they saw the bright foliage come and fade; November with its dull grey sky, its sharp cutting winds, its long dark nights and short dark days, came too, and found them ready.

Norman's out-of-door work was done for this season; he was now to be teacher and scholar too, for his father had engaged private lessons for him from the minister at Grafton, and the boy was to have rest both of mind and body, for his true mental rest, inconsistent as it may seem, was in study. He was like a child tired for want of the play which it loved best.

Every one was better pleased with the new arrangements than Grace. The change of position which it gave her she especially disliked. Having been teacher, it was hard to be pupil; to command was far more agreeable to her than to obey; and she bid fair to make more trouble in the school than she had during the summer, when her father interfered to restore matters to a proper state. Grace had such a way of excusing herself it was difficult ever to convince her of an error; and she was sincere in the reasons for her conduct which she offered. Now, in reply to her father's expostulation, she said, "she was too near

Norman's age to want to mind him; that she had taught longer than he had, and was a greater proficient in the art," with many more reasons all plausible, and to her own self most convincing. Her father had but one reply to make after hearing her:—"Grace, how has Hope behaved toward you for the past summer, and what one single reason is there which you have offered which would not apply with equal force to her?"

"But Hope is so much better than I am."

"That is a mean reason to give, Grace; the fact may be so, but how came Hope to be so much better?"

"Because she always was."

"Because she tries every day of her life in all her duties, small and great, to be faithful and true, and while you have, occasionally, moods of attempting the same, which vary in length from one day to one week, you are never faithful in being faithful, never true in being true."

Grace looked troubled, but her father did not take any pains to explain what he meant; he liked to give her a thought over which she must puzzle before it was clear to her; but she always liked the last word; and her father left her while she was trying to draw him into a discussion.

When she went into the school-room she was late. Norman called for an excuse, but she was not inclined to give him one; answering haughtily, "That he could

find their father and ask him, if he was very desirous to know where she had been and what doing."

Norman looked so troubled that Hope slid her hand into Grace's, and with a coaxing tenderness which was peculiar to her, whispered:—

"Dear Gracy, don't vex Norman; do act prettily."

"I shall do as I please, Miss Hope; you had better mind your lessons, and not be whispering, you are so very faithful."

Hope dropped her hand and bent her face closely over the book to conceal her tears; Grace watched her for a moment, and then Hope felt the hand coming softly back; there was a gentle pressure, then a soft kiss, and Grace said, "Norman, I am sorry I spoke so; I was late because papa stopped me, or rather I stopped him; we were talking together, and I did not hear the bell."

"Thank you, Grace," said Norman, simply.

Grace felt the reply more than anything her father had said to her, and for the remainder of the morning went quietly on with her studies, the best child in school, and quite the admiration of Louis, who, under the new rule, had been admitted again. Norman was a strict teacher; fond of getting his lessons perfectly himself, he probably required more than an older and more experienced one would have done; he never spared himself, so he thought little of sparing others. The royal road to knowledge was all flower-covered to

him; if there were rough precipices to climb, he could look beyond them to the glorious prospect which they could not conceal. Difficulties by the way, but he had not now to learn that you must clasp "the thistle firmly if you would avoid its wound;" so he pushed his young scholars rapidly forward, praising, helping, but never allowing them to pause; no time for play or rest, it was only on, on. Under this pressure the children were much trouble, much anxious care; but it mattered not, this line passed, they were nearing the next, and the next. It was impossible for the elder ones to avoid catching some of his enthusiasm, and Mr. Evans saw with pleasure that his system of home education was the most rapidly improving one he had ever tried, and in the main the happiest to them all; but there was one point upon which he had not thought, the constant overtax which this was to Norman. The boy seemed so well and happy that no fear for him ever crossed his mind, and he helped him by relieving him almost entirely from any but the most necessary work on the farm. Still, even this most necessary work was quite too much for him; he needed play, the noisy recreation of other children of his age, and needed it only the more that he so little inclined to seek it.

One month of school had hardly passed before Thanksgiving came on, *the* festival of New England. To this and the days of vacation which must necessarily

accompany it, the children looked forward with the utmost pleasure. There was no end to the plans which they made for enjoyment. Nothing could be too wild or joyous for Grace. They brought snow, ice, everything which belonged to the pleasure of a mountain winter, to add to it; and, perhaps, with their teeming fancies, they had almost as much enjoyment in the planning as they would have had in the reality. Mr. Wood, Norman's teacher, was to come up from Grafton with his two boys and his daughter Ellen, after the religious exercises of the day were ended; and they were to spare nothing which would conduce to make the day one long to be remembered as the first festival in the new home at Glenburn.

Winny was in her element. Such rows of pies—apple, pumpkin, mince, and custard! such jars of cake, and doughnuts, turkeys, chickens, ducks, beef, and pork!—everything the farm could minister to the occasion was there, and ready to do right loyal service. It was only the day before, the children were counting the hours, and school had been let out an hour or two earlier, for Winny had many domestic matters in which Grace and Hope would be of great service, and very willing helps they were; so, of course, very efficient. Norman and Oscar were to go to Grafton for the last articles needed to be purchased. In short, everything was upon that tiptoe of expectation in which children especially delight.

The afternoon was very bleak; sharp, bitter winds

came sweeping down from the mountain tops, laden with the gathering frost; the great bare branches shook and groaned like giants with their teeth chattering from the cold; and the little cowering bushes bent themselves to the ground as if supplicating the warm care of the friendly snow. The boys came in with very numb hands from harnessing the horses to drive to Grafton, and Winny could recall afterwards how pale and pinched Norman looked as he stood for a minute at the stove, trying to get some warmth into his chilled body before starting on his ride. But he did not put on his overcoat or take any extra precaution against the cold, though he felt himself almost struck by it, as they started, as if it had been a mortal hand. The roads were good, the horses fresh; they went and came rapidly, but not soon enough for Norman, who was seized, before reaching home, with chills, which rendered him unable to hold the reins; so that, for the first time in his life, and very much to his delight, Oscar found himself driving the spirited horses at a very rapid rate over the road. If they paused for even a moment, Norman would impatiently urge them on; and when, at last, they stopped at the stables, they were white with foam. Norman saw it, but seemed very unconcerned. With a mechanical indifference he unharnessed them, and put them up; and when his father, hours afterward, went to look after them, he found them still wet and hot.

Oscar had a dim idea that something unusual must have happened to Norman, so he took out the bundles and carried them in, Norman looking on with a heavy eye, without making the least offer to help him. When they were all on Winny's table, Norman drew his chair very close to her stove, and seemed to be suffering so much from the cold, that Winny brought to him a hot cup of tea, which, good, thoughtful soul, she had made some time since to warm them thoroughly when they should come home. Norman took it, but turned away sickened from it; and when Winny asked him the reason, answered her incoherently. She was immediately alarmed, and called his father. There was no mistaking the case; Norman was in a high fever, and before his room could be properly warmed and prepared for him, he was quite delirious. No one can describe the consternation and alarm which spread over the house. Even Mr. Evans lost his usual calm self-possession, gave rapid orders, and then went to execute them himself; while Mrs. Evans, wringing her hands and crying aloud, added much to the general confusion.

Hope, after she had recovered a little from her first alarm, made an effort to quiet Norman by sitting upon his bed and laying her cheek softly against his; but, although for a moment he seemed partly conscious who it was and what she wanted, he pushed her violently away from him, called her many strange names, and at

last shrieked in horror, if she tried to approach him. Her father sent her from his room; and when he saw how pale and terrified she looked, told her to find Mr. Brosseau and send him immediately to Grafton for a physician. Anything she could do for Norman would be the speediest way to restore her. Mr. Brosseau could not be found, but the news of Norman's sudden attack had reached the French house before her, and she found Louis with Crantz all saddled and bridled, waiting to go. To get help as quickly as possible being her first thought, Hope saw Crantz fly with headlong speed down the road, as if he knew and sympathized with their excitement, while Louis kept urging him on with boot and whip and voice, as long as they were in sight. When Hope returned to the house, Winny had persuaded Mrs. Evans, and all the children but Grace, to leave Norman's room. Hope stole softly in, looking very timidly toward the bed, but Norman took no notice of her, though he was talking very fast, and occasionally interrupting himself with a loud, unnatural laugh, a laugh which made his sisters shudder and cling closely together.

Hours must pass before the physician could be even reasonably expected, and Mr. Evans very well knew that he might be away, or detained with severe sickness in town, so as not to be able to come, perhaps, until the next day; but Louis had been charged, in any such emergency, to seek until he could find a

physician, if possible. The night came on: his father and Winny tried every remedy that they could remember for breaking up a fever; but still Norman talked and laughed, and tried to fling himself from his bed, often compelling his father to hold him by the exertion of all his strength. Hope and Grace remained sitting there, as if grief and terror had deprived them of their senses, until their father sent them to bed, urging, as a reason for their doing so, that the presence of so many excited Norman, and consequently injured him. Nature is kind to her young children. Both of these felt sure, when they left the room, that they could not sleep. Indeed it would be so cruel and wrong, that nothing would induce them to attempt it. But they soon wept themselves into forgetfulness, and when Mr. Evans came to ask Hope for an article which he needed, he found her sweetly asleep, though the tears were still upon her cheeks. He did not waken her, Winny finding a substitute which rendered it unnecessary. The physician arrived just after day broke, bringing Louis with him; but tired and sleepy as the boy was, he showed no inclination to go home to his bed. Creeping softly to Norman's door, he curled himself up like a great dog, and when Mr. Evans came out, he stumbled over him, finding, as he attempted to move him out of the way, that he too had fallen asleep. The physician, Dr. Strong, pronounced Norman very ill. The attack was typhoid fever, which had settled

at once upon the brain. The boy was young and strong. He might live through it; but such cases were generally attended with much danger. The prescriptions were simple. He trusted more to nature and nursing than to medicine. There must be perfect quiet, both in and out of the room; and if he should become conscious, only cheerful, hopeful faces around him. His wanderings gave evidence of an overtasked brain. His life would require to be called back, if God, in his infinite kindness, saw best to give it, by the tenderest and most sunshiny care. What could be done? A hired nurse, in the circumstances, seemed to be out of the question. Mrs. Evans was entirely incompetent; and as for the poor father, he was already overburdened. Winny! how could Winny find a moment for anything? Why, tired as she was, with these Thanksgiving preparations, she looked pale and worn by this one night of watching and anxiety. Could Hope do? Norman was altogether too sick for any child to nurse, however thoughtful. Yet some one must be constantly there, some one that would see quickly what should be done, and never forget.

Mr. Evans' distress was too apparent to escape the experienced eye of the good physician, and he proposed that the woman who was there now should be retained as nurse, while another should take her place in the kitchen. But who could be the "other" that could fill Winny's place? This question was to answer it-

self in a way very unexpected to Mr. Evans. Going into the room to waken Grace and Hope, in order to have them prepare breakfast for Dr. Strong, before he should take the long, cold ride to Grafton, he saw, as he passed the kitchen door, a strong light glimmering from underneath it. Opening it, in some alarm, he found Mrs. Brosseau there, with every preparation for the physician's breakfast, made as completely as if done by Winny herself. Singularly enough, this excited only a momentary feeling of surprise, and he said,—

"Thank you, Mrs. Brosseau; this was very kind and thoughtful in you."

"Me be glad do what can," said the French woman. "How is the sick infant, now?"

"Very sick. Can you stay here to-day?"

"Yas, and many days, mon enfans take de good care of Louis; he say, he mamma now."

"Louis is very thoughtful, I saw the boy last by Norman's door."

"Yas. Winny say, Go for ma'ma, and he go."

"Then I need not call the children; we want the house so very still."

"No, no; me make no noise. Vary still," and so, indeed, she had been. Though near the kitchen, Mr. Evans had heard no sound to lead him to suppose any one was there. With a heart considerably lightened he went back to Norman's room for the physician, and encountered an anxious whisper from Winny.

"That 'ere furriner, Mr. Evans, she ain't got no right, has she? I was beat into it; I didn't see else we could do."

"Everything, so far as I can judge, is as well d as you would do it yourself. Your post must be h by Norman's bed; while there is life, this is o hope."

"Our trust is in the Rock of Ages," said Winny solemnly looking towards the sick boy; "but I am very thankful for any help He sends, even if it is nothing but a furriner."

XV.—ANXIOUS DAYS.

XV.

Anxious Days.

HOPE'S feeling, when she wakened, was one of regret; something was wrong, though for some minutes she could hardly tell what; at last the consciousness first came that it was Thanksgiving morning, and next, that she had left Norman on the last night very ill, and that it was hours since she had heard from him. To wake Grace, dress with all haste, and hurry to his room, occupied but a few minutes. Hope went without leave, forgetting that the last request of her father on the previous night was, that no one of the children should enter Norman's room without his permission. This was very unusual for her to do; her father looked much surprised when he saw her coming in, and motioned her to go directly away.

Hope cast one look at Norman, and that told her that he was changed; so changed, that had she seen him anywhere else she certainly would scarcely have known him. His eyes were wide open, but they did

not seem to see; his lips kept moving, without his making a sound; and his hair, wet and stiff, looked as if the very life had left it.

Instead of moving to obey her father, Hope went a step or two nearer the bed. With any other child, Mr. Evans would have considered the act one of disobedience; but with Hope, he knew it only said, how surprised and grieved she was at the change which one short night had made in her brother. Taking her trembling hand in his, instead of insisting on her leaving the room, he lead her to the bed and said, "Dr. Strong pronounces this typhoid fever. He says it has attacked the brain, and though Norman is very ill, he does not give up all hope of him, but he must have the best of nursing and quiet. You see you cannot do anything for him here, it will take all the experience that both Winny and I have, but you can by keeping things still and orderly out of the room; your mother feels very poorly this morning. Grace will be excited, I shall have to depend very much upon you."

"Oh, papa! only let me stay here, I will be so very still, and I can help, I know I can."

"When he is better, your time will come. Now I shall be very grateful to my little daughter, if she will do precisely as I tell her." He led her toward the door, opened it, and Hope, with one long lingering look toward the bed, went out.

At first she could only sit down in a chair and cry;

but this was but for a few moments, before Grace had come down, she was busy and still, helping Mrs. Brosseau in her kitchen work. She went often to her mother's room. Mrs. Evans was really ill; she had a low, nervous fever, which had come on with the first thought of danger to Norman. She needed constant attention, and with much difficulty she persuaded Grace to sit by her bed. The two little children were awed by the unusual stillness and gloom of the house, and clung closely to Hope wherever she went; even Oscar did not like to be away from her but a few minutes at a time, and never throughout the whole of the first day showed the least inclination for the out-of-door sports, of which he was usually so fond. It was not until noon, that they any of them realized that this was Thanksgiving day. Mr. Evans had sent word by Dr. Strong, on his return to Grafton, to the minister, of Norman's sickness, so they did not expect their invited guests; but all these preparations which they had made so happily, what should be done with them and with the day? Hope was the first to ask the question, and after she had discussed it with Grace for some time they concluded it would be best to defer the whole until another time, and dine on bread and milk as a kind of fast, showing their sympathy with Norman. They had made all their arrangements, when their father, coming in, saw the table covered with blue bowls, and asked the reason; but, instead of praising them for the thought-

fulness and affection which they had shown, he said gravely,—

"No, my children; we have very much to thank God for, and it is not meet we should forget the mercies in the afflictions. The day is a very sad one for us, but let us not fail to be grateful for the loving kindness which has spared us all together in health, for so many years; we will pray to be forgiven that we have thought more of the clouds than of the sunshine, more of our griefs than of our joys."

The children only half understood him; the clouds and the griefs had been much more his than theirs, and when they prayed, it was a prayer of thanksgiving daily; what child ever carried to God a sorrow?

Mr. Evans was wise in his decision to have the quiet Thanksgiving arrangements go on. If death was to come in to their little circle, the future would surely have enough of sadness, they would bless God for their past; they would hallow this first festival with the thanks for mercies, for the daily blessing, for the plentiful harvest, the pleasant Glenburn home, the very sunlight and song of the summer just past, the very glory of the glorious autumn which had not yet quite faded from their dwelling. Mr. Evans would not have his children go on into life with a complaining spirit, conscious so much more of afflictions than of blessings, more ready to cry with Job: "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in

soul," rather than with David; "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thy days with loving kindness and tender mercies." Loving-kindness and tender mercies—seeing in everything the Father's hand, and feeling that it is those "he loves, he chasteneth."

To give this spirit to the day, Mr. Evans sent Winny for a short time to superintend the preparations, taking Hope in her place. How grateful Hope looked, as she came softly in, and sat down near the bed. Norman opened his eyes as she did so, and for an instant there was a flash of remembrance, a half smile, Hope bent over him, and kissed him, but he turned away and said something of its "not being time for recess, why would she keep on whispering so?" Hope had never before seen so sick a person, and it was fortunate for her that she could not now realize how very sick he was. She felt only a vague alarm, which rendered her more watchful and gentle. Norman, soon after her entrance, sank into a heavy slumber; there was nothing to be done but change the wet cloths on his head, and moisten his lips; after seeing her father do it once, Hope succeeded in a much quicker, handier way than he had been able to do, and he allowed her to take the entire care, while he rested himself in the large arm-chair which Winny had brought in for him. It was curious to see the child now, so small that she could not reach over

the bed without standing on a footstool, and yet there seemed to come to her, as by instinct, all the thousand little arts by which a good nurse is made. She was quick and sure in whatever she did; never making the slightest mistake, and all so noiselessly that one would have thought, to have watched her, she was experienced and calm. The fact, however, was very different. Hope's little heart beat so painfully, that sometimes she held her breath for fear the noise it made should awake the sleeper, and when she put the teaspoon between his tight-shut lips, her very pulses stood still, and a thousand indistinct fears crowded upon her. To increase her anxiety, she soon saw that her father slept, and now, indeed, the whole care was hers; what if Norman should awake, what if he should become wild and try to get out of his bed, as he had on the previous evening! Winny came in once, and seemed pleased to find both Norman and his father asleep; there was no medicine to be given; she pointed significantly to a small bell which she had brought with her; felt Norman's hands and pulse, smiled, yes, she really smiled. Hope could hardly believe it, but she had; and then she went out again, very much encouraged by this short visit. Hope learned to feel more confidence in herself, and by the time Winny came in to send her father and herself out to dinner, she was very unwilling to transfer the care to another.

Thanksgiving dinner! We have already said what

the spirit was which Mr. Evans wished his children to cultivate on this day, and we must briefly pass over the occasion, saying only that he spared no pains to carry it out. He was very cheerful, very grateful; and when they separated, not a child but had received from him a lesson of calm, happy trust in the dear God who was his God, and who might be theirs for ever. Mrs. Evans came to the table, and tried with something of his spirit to meet the occasion, but she was too ill for any place but her bed, and thither she returned as soon as the meal was ended. Grace was unusually quiet and subdued. She had received Hope's admittance into Norman's sickroom as a kind of right which belonged to her; indeed, it is very doubtful whether she would have had sufficient courage or confidence in herself to have gone, even if her father had wished it. She was much more in her element when, after dinner, her father requested her to fill a large basket with nice things and take it with the children, Oscar, Maud, and Guy, over to the house of the French people. She soon forgot everything else in her delight at the pleasure she was conferring, and they all came home rather boisterous from the fine frolic they all had had together with the little French baby. Mr. Evans stilled them gently: if the shadow of death was to fall upon their pathway it would come soon enough.

And now followed long, oh how long and how weary, days, no one can tell but those who have been similarly

situated. There were no neighbours who would alleviate the sickness by their kindness and sympathy; no one to watch for them; no one to run in with the thoughtful inquiry; no one to offer a home to the younger children who really pined in the stillness and gloom of the house. Mrs. Evans became every day more and more helpless; indeed, she seemed to require almost as much care as Norman, and as the fever went on, Mr. Evans asked himself which of these two would go first. Almost imperceptibly, Winny was transferred from Norman's room to his mother's; no one else seemed to have the control of those lawless nerves but Winny; whether it was the old, child obedience returning to the sick woman, or her life-long fear of Winny, it would be impossible to tell; but certainly to no one else did she yield so easily; not one beside Winny, not even her husband, could do for her what she really needed. Hope, and occasionally Grace, took her place with their father and Norman. There was little that could be done for him; little but watch and wait. Dr. Strong came frequently, and spoke favourably of the progress of the disease; he was doing quite as well as he could expect. These visits were blessings to the troubled father, upon whom the accumulated responsibilities, and the possible fatal results hung heavily, notwithstanding his resignation, and his willingness to [illegible] in his Father's hands.

[illegible] the third week of Norman's sickness, when

life and death seemed struggling with equal power for the boy, that Mr. Evans was called away to see some one who had come on pressing business. Mrs. Evans had an unusually feeble day. Winny could not leave her, and the little children, rebelling at some tyranny on Oscar's part, under whose care they were now often left, had made so much noise that Hope must go to them to quiet them. All these circumstances left Grace, for the first time since Norman's sickness, for a few minutes alone with him; and she had now become so accustomed to him that she felt none of the timidity which she had at first. She had heard Dr. Strong give orders to have powders administered at stated times, and though her father had forbidden her ever to give anything to Norman, as she did not understand doing so without worrying him, having none of Hope's natural gifts as a nurse, and being almost unfortunate in her inabilities; now, she thought, being all alone, she should succeed as well as Hope; so she watched the hands of the watch somewhat impatiently, hoping it would be time before Hope returned, that she should see how it would seem to be a real, responsible nurse. Hope was detained longer than she had expected; the children were not easily pacified, and when she returned to the room, she found to her regret that it was ten minutes beyond the time named. Going hastily to the place where she kept the medicine, she found a large paper of quinine, which Dr. Strong had left with her

[illegible] with strict injunctions to him only for its use, had been taken from its place.

"Where is it?" she asked, in a frightened voice.

"Is what?" said Grace. "If it is the medicine you are looking for, I gave it to Norman at the proper time."

"Grace, what have you done? here is the medicine that should have been given. You have killed Norman."

The two children stood looking at each other, the very pictures of dismay and affright. Every particle of colour had left their faces, and their lips were stiff and bloodless. Hope was the first one to recover herself; she took up the tumbler and spoon which still stood on the little table by the bed; fortunately Grace's awkwardness had made it impossible for her to force Norman to take all she had prepared, part of it was left in the tumbler, and part had been spilled upon the bed clothes; but all Hope saw was the fine white powder which still remained under the water.

Norman lay perfectly stupid, as unconscious of what had been done as if he had been a block of marble; and after assuring herself that he was still living, Hope ran for Winny, to whom she communicated what had happened in whispers, outside of her mother's door. Winny knew nothing of the nature of quinine; she was accustomed to follow blindly whatever direction the [illegible] left; and now it was enough to alarm her to [illegible] these had been disobeyed. She sent Hope [illegible] mother, and went herself to Norman's room to

be prepared for whatever emergency might occur. Hope found Grace leaning against the kitchen door as she came back.

"What is it, what does he say?" she asked, in a frightened voice.

"He is coming; he says it is fearful."

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?"

"Be as quiet as you can, and hope for the best. Why did you give it?"

"I thought it was right; I knew it was time. You have given medicine a hundred times. I didn't see why I could not once—"

"You see now you did not know about it."

"I do see; oh, what shall I do? Norman will die, and I shall have killed him."

"Perhaps not; God may save him."

Both of the children waited until their father had come; neither of them liking to go back into the room without him; it was not long; he hastily excused himself from the man with whom he was conversing, and they saw him enter Norman's room with a very grave face and close the door behind him. He had passed Grace without taking any notice of her, notwithstanding she sobbed aloud as she saw him. Pretty soon he opened the door and beckoned to Hope: "Send Mr. Brosseau," he said, "for the physician; tell him to ride fast, and see that some doctor comes without delay."

"Will he die?" asked Hope.

"God grant not; I cannot tell;" he shut the door again, and Grace felt as if every chance of life for Norman closed with it.

The hours that passed now were years in life's experience to her; her thoughts, with a depth and intenseness such as had never been theirs before, went quickly over the past and into the future. Running along through the whole course of her actions, it seemed to her she could see a dark line; and in its gloomy shadow there lay so many faults, so many failings, so many positive sins: "I have never," she exclaimed, in much bitterness, "never been faithful—never been literally and purely true. It has been eye-service, time-service, nothing that could bear the gaze of a spirit-searching God; and now, now, he is punishing me, oh, so terribly. Hope never would have given that medicine unless she was told—never would have disobeyed as I do, and all for what—all for what?"

We will not follow Grace through the hours of suffering which were before her; one thing only we will remark, if she goes through them and comes out no more faithful, no more true, with all the traits which make us love her, her character will be utterly worthless in the eyes of Him who seeth not as man sees.

When the physician arrived, Norman had fallen into a deep sleep. He lay there so still, such a perfect picture of death, excepting now and then a faint, convulsive heaving of his chest, that Grace, and indeed all but the

experienced eye of the doctor, felt that at any moment he might go from them.

So passed twelve long hours, in which the slow hand of the clock seemed to be measuring out the line which separated life from death; that invisible line, over which one day we must all pass.

At last Norman opened his eyes, and their light fell clear and intelligently upon Hope. He had known no one for weeks, but he said now, "Hope!"

It was God giving him back; the physician smiled as he took his hand and felt the already softened pulse. "How do you feel?" he said, cheerfully. "You have had a very nice nap; are you refreshed?"

"Yes, I think so. Have I been very ill?"

"A little ailing; do you know me?"

Norman looked at him anxiously, then shook his head.

"Don't know me, and yet you have seen me every day for nearly a month, and had a great deal to say to me too." Norman looked still more puzzled, and the good doctor said, quickly, "Well, never mind, I wouldn't try to think now; you will know me well enough for the future. I am Dr. Strong, from Grafton, and I am very happy to make your acquaintance under these circumstances."

Dr. Strong had purposely prolonged his conversation with Norman, because he saw how excited the family were, and in how much danger therefore of exciting the

invalid. He had managed by quiet signs to Mr. Evans to tell him he wished the room empty, and so when he moved away from the bedside, and Norman looked again for Hope, he saw no one but his father. To him he smiled, and held out his hand, and his father taking it, said fervently,—

"Thank God, for this my son was dead, and is alive."

Dr. Strong told Mr. Evans the most absolute quiet and freedom from all anxiety would be necessary now for Norman's recovery; the wrong administering of the medicine, while it might, and in many cases would, have been attended with fatal consequences, had in this perhaps acted as a strong stimulant, and brought him safely through the crisis which was immediately impending; nothing remained to be done, but what careful nursing could do; "but not," he said, turning with a grave countenance toward Grace, "not precisely the kind of nursing this little Miss seems to do. My child, you must learn a very solemn lesson in care and fidelity from this, and to the latest day of your life never cease to be grateful to God for having spared you the pain which you must always have felt if he had died."

Poor Grace, she did not need now that any one should try to make the lesson more impressive than it already was, and when after a few days her father called her to converse with her upon it, he found her [illegible]itent and sensitive, and so firmly resolved [illegible] to be faithful and true, that he felt it

would be almost unkind to press the matter any further. So he prayed with her, asking God to make firm her wavering, failing resolution; to give her strength and fortitude in resisting the little temptations to be untrue, to make her feel earnestly and sincerely that it is only those who are faithful over a few things, that God maketh ruler of many, and to whom he promises the entrance "into the joy of thy Lord."


XVI.—WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.

XVI.

What the Bible Teaches.

THE first Sabbath that Norman, after his recovery, took his place among the family, in their home worship, his father read a sermon from this text: "For the Lord preserveth the faithful." The sermon had been written and printed purposely to set before children the great importance which God attaches to faithfulness. It was simple and direct. I wish I could put it into the hands of every child who reads this book; but, as I cannot, I must make a short abstract of it, hoping there are none of my young readers who will be inclined to skip over it because it is not story. They must imagine to themselves the whole Evans family gathered in the dining-room, made very cheerful and pleasant, even though it is January, and cold and dismal enough out of doors, by a bright wood fire which blazes and crackles as if it knew it was sent to make this very Sabbath morning a happy one to these children. Norman is in a large rocking-chair, supported by pillows,

looking very pale and thin, of course, but also as if health and strength were fast returning. Grace and Hope are seated on either side of him, vieing with each other in the thousand little attentions which they love so well to pay and he to receive. Guy and Maud have brought the foot-stool directly before him, and, at the risk of turning their backs upon their father, are sitting so that they can look directly in his face. Winny is not far off, and seems to have a motherly care of and pride in the whole group. Mrs. Evans is too feeble to leave her room, but has the door open so that, as Mr. Evans sits close by it, she can hear every word he reads. The French children are there too, but Norman is so changed by his sickness that it makes them feel shy; so they have taken the first seat they can find, and roll their great black eyes around as if they were only half as much at home as usual.

"The Lord preserveth the faithful." Louis has heard this word "faithful" used so often since he has known the Evans family, that it becomes talismanic at once to him, and his attention is fixed. He wonders, too, as he looks at the pale boy, if Norman is faithful, and that is the reason God has preserved him; so do all the children but Norman himself, and this is what Mr. Evans wishes. He wanted to bring distinctly before them all, that one reason why God had spared Norman's life might be, because he was, like Hope, faithful. The sermon explained, first, what it was to

be faithful. This was nothing new to the children; their father had told them over and over many times, still it seemed a little strange to them that some one else should have had printed for them the very same things. To be faithful was to be obedient, thoughtful, persevering, punctual, and, above all, true. Each one of these different traits was illustrated by Scripture character. Samuel was obedient and punctual. As soon as he thought he heard Eli call, instead of waiting to wonder whether it were so or not; whether he need rouse himself from his sleep—no very easy work for a tired child—he *ran* unto Eli, and said, "Here am I, for thou calledst me;" and so the faithful child grew to be the holy, anointed, beloved priest of God. We would gladly transcribe the other characters, did our limits allow; but if our readers will take the outline given, and fill it in for themselves, they may perhaps derive greater profit than if it were done for them. The second part of the discourse showed why God wished to preserve the faithful; and here one important point, upon which Mr. Evans lingered to make a few remarks was, because he had for every one a work to do, and to those only who were faithful could God entrust it. What was the work which God had given to each child there? They were so young that as yet no one knew it; but they did all know that the way God meant to prepare them for it was by having them learn to be faithful. This was their work now; this was what

was to fit them for that other and greater trust which was waiting for them. The Lord preserved these little ones; he held them in the hollow of his hand; he loved them as the apple of his eye; he went in and out before them, guarding them with his pillar of cloud by day, and his pillar of fire by night; he even gave his angels charge concerning them, to bear them tenderly up, lest they should dash their feet against a stone. How easy a thing it seemed to have God love them, and care to preserve them, only to be faithful. Here Grace looked up quickly. Her father had emphasized that word *only*, and Grace felt that he could never know how hard a thing she had found it. Why, it seemed to her to be the link in the chain which bound the Christian life all together—the keystone to the arch upon which rested her hopes of happiness here and hereafter. The sermon was a very exciting one to Norman. God had preserved him; he had made his bed in all his sickness, watched over him when no earthly eye could see, and stretched out his hand to deliver, when vain was the help of man. Was he faithful? had he been in the past? could he be in the future? Weak in body, and weak in mind now, he only confused and agitated himself as he endeavoured to press home the question, and it was well for him that, the sermon being finished, his father chose for the closing hymn that comforting one, the one in which we may approach Christ as an elder brother, feeling how

tenderly he will care for us, and how earnestly he will help us, if we ask aright. The hymn was the following:—

"Yes, for me, for me he careth
With a brother's tender care;
Yes, with me, with me he shareth
Every burden, every fear.

Yes, o'er me, o'er me he watcheth,
Ceaseless watcheth, night and day;
Yes, e'en me, e'en me he snatcheth,
From the perils of the way.

Yes, for me he standeth pleading,
At the mercy-seat above;
Ever for me interceding
Constant in untiring love.

Yes, in me abroad he sheddeth
Joys unearthly, love and light;
And to cover me, he spreadeth
His paternal wing of might.

Yes, in me, in me he dwelleth,
I in him, and he in me;
And my empty soul he filleth
Here and through eternity.

Thus I wait for his returning,
Singing all the way to heaven;
Such the joyful song of morning,
Such the tranquil song of even."

There was one result of hearing this sermon, which was unexpected to Mr. Evans; it drew Grace's and Hope's attention to the frequency and force with which the Bible insists upon faithfulness as one of the first and most important Christian graces. Of its simply

practical value, they had heard a great deal; as the foundation of a good and reliable character, they knew it was in their father's eye, indispensable; but that a great and wise God had also selected it as a foundation of Christian character, and made it also indispensable, they had never before realized. This afternoon, when Norman had gone to his room to rest, and they were left alone together, Grace proposed that they should bring their Bibles and see how many verses they could find of a similar meaning with the text of the sermon. To this Hope willingly consented, and the two children became deeply interested in the search. The result of their evening's work among many verses which, though their spirit implied the same thing, did not literally inculcate it, was to choose the following, and commit them to memory, hoping by so doing to deepen the impression of the day: "For the Lord preserveth the faithful."

"Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they shall dwell with me." Grace liked to talk over each verse as they selected it; and this she thought must mean, that God would keep his eye upon the faithful, very much as is meant by the common saying, "I have had my eye on it for some time," when one wants to indicate that they have marked, and chosen it, above all others, as being specially suited to their purpose; "that they shall dwell with me," must mean, she thought, live in heaven; but Hope said, "It seemed to her more likely to mean, dwell

with God here; that is, be helped by him to be so good that he could, as he says in another verse in John: 'If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'" Whichever way it was, however, they concluded in the end it meant one and the same thing; for those with whom God made his abode here, would certainly dwell with him in heaven. This was a very pleasant thought to the children, it seemed to bring heaven and happiness very near; but the next verse was one which made them feel, delightful as it would be, it was far from easy to attain, or ready to fall to them without a hard struggle.

"'But a faithful man, who can find?' What does that mean," asked Grace, quickly.

"It means," said Hope, "that it is very hard work to be faithful, as God understands it."

"I know that very well," and Grace's voice had a very discouraged tone in it. "Haven't I been trying all my life, and been always—always—always failing? I don't believe it will do the least good in this world to try; I am almost ready to give it up."

"Oh, Grace, don't say so! The Bible only means, not to have us think it is too easy, and so, being indolent, to fail entirely of it. Hear this very next verse, speaking of Daniel, 'But they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error found in him.'"

"I know who that is, besides Daniel," said Grace.

"Who?"

"Oh, I shan't tell; but I know a little bit of a girl, not much more than so high," laying her hand on Hope's head, "with whom there is none occasion nor fault, because she is faithful, nor any error found in her."

"I never saw such a person," said Hope, laughing.

"But I have, though; and she is a queer, good little soul, as ever lived."

"Ah! here father would say is the secret of the whole thing," said Hope, looking up from her Bible, without making any direct reply to Grace's last words, "'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.'"

"Oh, dear me, I know it, it's always so, about everything that is good! it isn't great, showy things, that one can do so much more easily than not, because they are always in your way, and you might as well not see one of these Green Mountains as not see it; but it's those least things, so very, very least, that they are really hidden, tiny little bits of things, those count far more than the mountains, and it don't seem to me just fair, does it to you, Hope?"

Hope looked puzzled for a minute, then she said: "I suppose the one we can't help doing, and the other we can; it's like going to weed in a garden, and pulling up only the big weeds; they show the most; but

it's the little ones that cling close to the roots that do the greatest harm; if we pull these all up, there never will be any big ones; and if we are faithful in the least things, we can't help being faithful in much."

Hope, perhaps, had some clear idea in her own mind, but she failed to make it so to Grace, who said, "Perhaps you understand it, but I don't, nor, just what you mean neither; I rather think I will lay that up to talk over with Norman. Here, after all, is the verse I like best of them all, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things'—there is the same thing again, Hope—'I will make thee ruler over many, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' This whole verse sounds as if the struggle was over, and at last the reward had come."

"Not so much as this," said Hope. "Listen, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' A crown of life! what a strange thing that must be, Grace. What does it mean?"

"A crown of life!" repeated Grace. "If it had been a golden crown, all filled with jewels, or a laurel crown for the victor, or an imperial crown, we should have known well enough, but life crown is something new. I wonder I never thought of it before, many times as I have read the verse. We will ask father as soon as he comes. Bnt you see, Hope, it is not like the other, where all is over, and the 'well done,' comes; it is '*Be* thou faithful unto death,' it don't mean be faithful

to-day, and forget it to-morrow, does it? but it is until death. That seems a long way off, and as if it would take us a great while to get there. But here comes father, now let us ask him."

Mr. Evans was very much pleased at their occupation, and readily explained to them that the crown of life meant a state of being in which life was freed from everything that made it often hard and dreary here, the very fulness of the joy of life.

This, the children could well understand. Life to a child was everything.

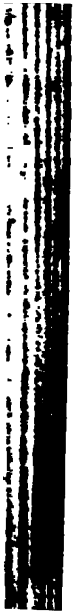
> "A simple child,
> That lightly draws its breath;
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death?"

Death to it is a strange, dark, cold mystery. Life eternal, joyous life, is but the blossoming of the bud; and no reward for faithfulness could come home to the happy, bounding heart like this: the crown, the perfection, the glory of life.

To Grace it was specially impressive. She closed her Bible; it had promised to her the greatest of all blessings, but what remained now was to earnestly and zealously strive for it. Hope took a piece of paper and wrote out on it, ready for committal, the verses already mentioned, adding to them two more, which, though perhaps not quite so pertinent, were very precious. "Moreover, it is required of stewards, that

a man be found faithful." "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, for that he counted me faithful."

As Grace had left her Bible, filled with delight at the promise held before her of the crown of life, so now Hope left hers, filled with delight at the promise of help from Christ Jesus, our Lord, of his enabling her to be faithful, so that she could be among the chosen number whom he "counted." And both children carried from to-night into the coming week, a more scriptural knowledge of, and we will hope a firmer desire to prove truly faithful.




XVII.—THE MOTHER.

XVII.

The Mother.

TO one member of the family the events of the past month had been those of the utmost importance; this was Oscar. Norman's long sickness had made it necessary for his father to call upon him to do many things for which he never thought him old enough before. The immediate consequence was that he was a much busier boy, and every one knows that it is for "idle hands Satan finds the mischief." He began at first reluctantly, and not in the best humour in the world, to do as he was bid; but in a very few days he became interested in his work. It was pleasant to have the horses call for him when he opened the stable door. It was as good as a game with the boys used to be, to have old Dick, the large buck, try to knock him down; and, as for the cows and calves, they had already learned to know him, and, the very moment he came in sight, had such a cheerful way of welcoming him. Norman had not been ill a week, before his father dis-

covered a new element in his character; he found that the way to make him faithful was to trust him in some matters of grave importance. Now, though he would forget daily, and be very unfaithful about little things, yet in a great matter, like foddering all the cattle, chopping the feed, watering the horses, and the like, he was punctual and very trusty; so that after the first week his father left them to him, without a word.

His father began to hope he would prove an exception to the general rule, and instead of beginning with the least and advancing to the much, he would begin with much, and finding faithfulness easy and desirable here, would be tempted to carry it back into all the minor matters of life; and, indeed, so it proved, before Norman was able to take care upon himself again. Oscar could and did relieve him of a great deal; besides, the boy had grown manly in everything. It was a wonder to the whole family, that so great a change could have come in so short a time. Louis had been with him very frequently in his out-of-door work, but there were no new plans of adventures, the boy's spirit seemed to be having a rest, through these cold winter months. Louis had made fast progress in his books; and he loved far better to be sitting over the stove, with one of the story books which he had borrowed from Norman, than to be out even for the coasting, which the month of January brought with unusual excellence to the mountain boys. The physician

had entirely forbidden Norman's teaching again this winter; and, although Grace would gladly have resumed her care of the school, the children having had a more able and experienced teacher protested against it, even Maud and Guy begging to have Hope instead. Grace, however, soon found as much as she could do in the care of her mother, who required almost all her time and attention—as Hope was needed for the children—and Norman was, in truth, recovering his strength but slowly. Mrs. Evans, instead of growing better, as her husband had anticipated, when Norman's fever was past, seemed slowly but surely to lose ground every day. This week she sat up fewer hours than she had done on the last; small matters which she had attended to for herself, she now left to others. Her interest in her family had always been of the complaining, fitful kind, so common to nervous invalids, but now, even this almost entirely ceased; she asked few questions, and indeed seemed most of the time in a listless stupid state. It was in vain to attempt to rouse her; if she wakened for a few minutes, she soon relapsed into the same condition. From the first she had expressed a decided preference to Grace over Winny for nurse; but Grace could not always be had, and it was not until her father began to express fears as to her mother's final recovery, that Grace gave herself with whole heartedness to the care, and even then she required to be over-looked both by her father and Winny.

Very drearily the month of February dragged on. Everything was ice-bound, the snow lay deep and unbroken away up the steep mountain sides. The trees bare, or covered with the deep green which is almost as dark and frowning as the naked limbs, seemed stiff and stately, as if the last hard frost had frozen them into just this position, and would not let them go. Long icicles hung pendant from the huge masses of gray rock, and great, heavy icebergs, lay like glaciers on their tops. Huge, uprooted trees, over whose green fallen sides the children had played many times, in the pleasant summer, now, like some strange wild beasts, seemed curled up for a long winter's nap. Guy could not be diverted from thinking that they were bears sound asleep, and never ventured far from the house alone, for fear they should come down upon him. There was no sport out-of-doors; the cold was too intense; the coasting hidden with the skating, under impassable drifts; and even the fun of sleigh-riding, when its necessary accompaniment was numb hands and feet, aching ears, and a frozen nose, soon lost its poetry. Nothing remained for the children but to be shut up in the house, and to *keep still.* This seemed to be the burthen of every one's cry: "Don't make a noise, you will disturb your mother," until the little folks began to tread on tip-toe, and whisper much oftener than anything else.

Now indeed Hope was invaluable; she contrived all

kinds of quiet amusements for the children, and gave herself up to taking care of them and making them happy. She even neglected Norman for their sakes, reserving her hours of reading to him till such time as the children were in bed, and not allowing herself any other recreation or amusement than that she found in doing for others. Was Hope happy? Yes, very. She, least of all at Glenburn, thought how dark and dreary the days were; the greatest fault she found with them was, that they were not half long enough for her to accomplish all she felt she should.

Dr. Strong was again in attendance, and though he said Mrs. Evans' disease was prostration of the nervous system more than anything else, yet he felt that unless she could rally soon, there would be very little chance of her final recovery. He hoped everything from the cheerful oncoming of spring. "Then Mr. Evans must take her back for a visit to Castleford: change would be of the greatest benefit to her." "The oncoming of spring;" yes, it came at last; the light crept over the mountain tops a little earlier every morning, and disappeared at night a little later behind the dark woods. The sun felt warm as the eager children held their hands out to welcome it. Drops began to trickle down from the corners of the house, and the snow melted in round spots from before the southern door. Spring *was* coming. Mr. Evans drew a long sigh of relief; this had been a hard winter to him in the new home;

the prospect of its coming to an end was one for which he could not but feel specially grateful; he watched almost as eagerly as the children for every change, hoping, but in vain, that they would bring relief to his sick wife. She now failed rapidly, and at last became herself conscious of her situation. What an earlier effort on her part might have done for her it would be impossible to say, but it was too late, and the May beauty had not yet unfolded itself from under the crevice of the rock when she died. Her death, though not unexpected, was as death always will be, a great shock to her children. She had never been to them a true mother, but she was their mother nevertheless, and around her were bound those thousand ties by which God only unites us to one heart. It was a mourning, stricken family into which Mr. Wood, the minister from Grafton, came the morning after the event. The children, awe-struck, silent, timid, sat down in groups near him, and listened while he talked and prayed with them, with that peculiar hushed stillness that always falls over the house of death. There were none of the usual attendants of such a scene; no kind friends waiting to show their sympathy or offer their assistance; no acquaintances coming in to take their last look of the familiar face; the deep hush lay in the house, no less than in the death-room, and on the lawn where the grass grew noiselessly, and on the mountain where only the trees whispered funeral dirges; the very brooks, yesterday

full of the glad song of renewed life, to-day chanted mournfully. Everything within and without said to these children, their mother was dead; and peculiarly solemn and sad it seemed to Mr. Wood as he sat among them.

There was a consecrated spot, separated by a little grove from the house, where Mrs. Evans' baby sister had been laid long years ago, when her father resided at Glenburn; here Mr. Evans decided to lay also this wife and mother. It seemed to be almost like keeping her with them, to have her there where they could visit her grave daily, and her children cover it with the dear wild flowers.

The funeral was to take place from the house. Mr. Wood gave notice of the time from his pulpit, expressing a hope that, as the family were in such a peculiarly lonely situation, as many of his people would go up to attend it as could make it convenient, Mr. Evans being a man who would feel grateful for such marks of respect and esteem. Mrs. Evans was a stranger to nearly all in Grafton; but Mr. Evans had already made himself beloved by the worth and consistency of his character, and there were many who were glad to do all they could for him now. The day of the funeral was one of those delicious spring days when everything is so full of the promise of life, that death seems in strange and awful contrast. On this day many carriages for the first time found their way to Glenburn, and the

lonely funeral, which Mr. Evans had so much dreaded, from the permanent effect which he was afraid it might have upon his children, was robbed of this additional pang by the thoughtful kindness of his friends. Still, when it was all over, the new mound was made, and the last friend had left, there fell upon the home a feeling of desolation, at the extent of which those who knew Mrs. Evans' value to her family would have been surprised. But it was God's hand; He does not come to those we love, "change their countenance and send them from us," without meaning it shall teach us the great lesson for which it was intended. These children were not to hurry back into life and forget their mother; even Guy, young as he was, never thought of his home in Glenburn without there coming over him a hushed, solemn feeling, a remembrance of this first night, when the mother was put from them into her still narrow home. My young reader, this is the time when you will remember not only your mother, but every act of disobedience toward her, everything that you have done that has grieved and troubled her, every gratification that you have withheld from her, every careless word, every thoughtless look even, will be there, and they will pass before you, and you must see and think of them. Remember this while you have your mother with you. Remember it when you are tempted to do what she does not wish, when you feel vexed and cross that you cannot do as you please. In all probability

you will live to see the night when you have returned from her grave; do you think you shall regret then a single, gentle, loving, kind word or deed; shall you be sorry that you always tried to make her happy; to show her how dearly you prized her, and how her happiness and approbation was the one great wish of your life? Be sure, while hundreds have mourned with bitter tears too late, too late, over unkindness and disobedience, never yet was there shed one tear for love and tenderness.

Grace to-night had many bitter memories; she could recall, even during the past winter, so many little neglects, so many failures to make her mother comfortable, to wait upon her, to the forgetfulness of herself. Nor was Hope without her vain regrets; good child as she had been, there were many times when she might have done differently, might have been gentler, more thoughtful, more self-sacrificing. The children lay awake a long time that night, confessing to each other and longing, with an ardour new to them, for one single moment more with their living mother, only one moment in which they could ask her to forgive them. So God teaches us this great life-lesson of love and obedience, of "honouring" our parents.


XVIII.—COMING HOME.

XVIII.

Coming Home.

WE must now pass with our readers over the next five years; and when we return to Glenburn we shall find it in many respects altered from what it was at the time of our first visit, when we came to it that pleasant June night with the Evans family. The new paint has faded, the white sides of the house show many weather stains, and the green blinds have a blue hue, caught from the rains and the snows. Brown points show themselves on the top of the fence palings, the spruce row of boxes, that shut in the trees just outside the yard, have broken boards, and the trees themselves have shot out so many new branches that they hardly look as if they could be the same stinted avenue that was pining for want of care and affection. It is August now; but there is something wanting beside the freshness and beauty of a June day; everything has a worn, unrepaired look, as if the owner found life hard, and could, in the lan-

guage of the country "hardly make both ends meet;" yet there is more land under tillage, and the forest seems to have receded, leaving large fields of raspberry bushes and bare gray rocks.

The eye notices, beside these, one other improvement; the sugar-house has been altered into a neat little dwelling-house. There is a pretty front door, with a large window on its side, and three other windows where there used to be only rough boards; there is a convenient kitchen-end, that has a latticed window, as if it contained a milk pantry. Then, there is a yard, and the whole is enclosed with a cedar hedge, which cedar being indigenous, has grown quite high, so that it requires an effort to look over it, though you are well repaid if you do, for you catch a glimpse of the prettiest little flower garden there is within miles around. At a short distance you see a new barn, not large, but it has attached to it quite capacious cow-houses, and a long low shed for sheep. Some one is thriving at Glenburn, but as it is honestly done, we have only occasion to rejoice. A life that is bare existence to Mr. Evans, is money-making to his French workman, and yet neither can be blamed.

This August morning, upon which we return to Glenburn, is evidently a time of much importance to its occupants, for there is now, and there has been since early daylight, a sound of bustle and preparation, as if something very stirring was expected. Mr. Evans went

down to the fields in the gray of the dawn; what he had to do must be finished early; but he found Mr. Brosseau there and already at work. "The day will be a fine one, sir," he says, as Mr. Evans comes up.

"I hope so," and Mr. Evans watches the gossamer upon the grass, which is already sparkling with the brightening light.

"They will be here about four, I suppose."

"I shall expect them then; but the cars are not very regular; we must not be surprised if it is nearer five before they come," but as he said this, Mr. Evans drew out his watch to see how many hours there were to intervene, then both men fell quietly to their work.

Winny was astir before Mr. Evans; he found her in the kitchen as he passed out; and Winny is, after all, the only unaltered thing about the place. Mr. Evans' head has grown white rapidly; he has not a black hair left, and and the crow's feet have taken deep hold in the corners of his eyes. But Winny has perhaps a little more rotundity of figure, and now and then she puts on a cap, because she says "it's time she was bald and gray, besides having on false hair, but as she ain't she must come as nigh to it as she can, and do the next best thing." Her voice is a little shriller, but only makes its change to gentle, tender tones more perceptible; no one minds it. She can scold still, but the hard words insensibly "distill into honied sweetness" before the sentence changes, and her face, all scowling and angry,

is lighted up by a smile which makes the coarse, rugged features almost beautiful. She is now, and she has been *always* for the matter of that, before as well as after Mrs. Evans' death, both mistress and maid, but as she has no one to order but Etta, who has become established "help," and Etta knows she shall get a reward in the shape of a little pie, or an extra cake for every cross word she receives, she does not break her heart if she is found at times very deficient in her daily tasks. Etta is a handsome little girl. Perhaps it is this, the flash of those large dark eyes, or the curl of that round red lip, that suggests pies and cakes to Winny, for Winny, in her way, is a great lover of everything that is beautiful. Etta is, we are sorry to say it, very tricky; she tries the patience of her young mistress every day of her life, for there is something in her character which is perpetually at war with what is the great element still in the life of Hope Evans—her faithfulness. But we must not stop, as we are tempted to do, to linger over a full description of the changes which the last five years have wrought in each individual; here we are on this morning of the eighth of August; the father is busy in the field, and Winny as busy in the thousand and one things which crowd upon the thorough housekeeper with the earliest dawn. Etta has already been called three times, there is something a little ominous in the tramp of Winny's feet as she leaves her work to go for the fourth wakening; no one need doubt it will be

thorough enough this time. Tho heavy steps blend with Etta's pleasant morning dream. She manages to sit up in bed, and is very busy rubbing her black eyes open as Winny with no gentle touch opens the door. She has long since learned the power of a smile, and all Winny's anger disappears as she sees her; still there comes the usual snort, and she says :—

"So you have started, have ye; why, I thought one might as well try to wake the dead. I never see such a sleepy-head in all my life, never. See if you can't be down some time afore dinner," and so Winny disappears. In a half hour she spies Etta out in the flower-garden, picking flowers.

"Always arter them posies," she says to herself; "one would think there weren't no potatoes to wash, or if they were, they were to be washed in the morning dew. But the Lord forgive poor old cross Winny, and help her to bear in mind that a great many years ago she was a child, and liked posies as well as any on um."

But however great respect Winny may have for gathering posies, there is another voice calling Etta now, at the sound of which the child drops half her flowers, and would make a precipitate retreat if she were not fairly caught. So with the quick tact of her race she holds a flower toward the window, and says, "Only picking this for you, Miss Hope, while the dew is on it, you love them best so."

"Have you done your morning tasks?"

"I am going now, after I have brought this to you."

It is impossible to find much fault with Etta. Hope takes the flower, then comes herself to see everything well done. Hope, *our* Hope—how can we pass her by without a word—has not grown tall or handsome. She is still the little plain, dumpy thing she was on the first day when we saw her in the travelling-waggon. Any one would notice her as being peculiarly homely, but they would notice, too, that there was a something in her face which drew their eyes often back to it, and if they should see her in a crowd, and need a kind act done, they would certainly ask it of her. Hope was changed, though not much in appearance. Her character has grown deeper and stronger. Everybody depends upon her; they always did; but there is more to answer the demand now. The little "right-hand man" has become the strong staff, and no one leans on it so much as the already shaken father. Very truly Etta had said, "Hope loved flowers the best with the dew on them." Brightness and freshness were as necessary to her as the very air she breathed, and she liked everything bathed in the glory of the morning. She brought light, and sunshine, and joy wherever she moved. The old kitchen smiled this morning as she passed over its threshold, and the old servant smiled too, with a feeling that the door was

opened toward the east, and the early dawn beauties were stealing in.

"So much to do." This is the spirit of the house at this hour, but pray what? Everything was done yesterday; the house is like waxwork, a grain of dust can no more be found than a grain of stray gold; the pantry-shelves are groaning with their load of niceties; every article of dress has been laid out that could by any chance be needed; and yet everybody's feeling is, so much to do, and no one knows, not even Hope suspects, that is only the yearning of the heart to make a welcome fit for the comers; one that shall even dimly shadow forth the joy which their presence brings. Hope sees that Etta attends to her duties, then goes over every room in the house, hoping to find the "so much to do," but it constantly evades her, and at last, the clock pointing to a time when it seems proper to wake a tired boy, she goes to Oscar's door, and after many ineffectual attempts succeeds in conveying to him a half idea that it is almost breakfast time, that Louis has been four times to the house for him already, and even now she hears his voice inquiring in the kitchen. Oscar catches an indistinct sound of it, and it wakens him more quickly than all Hope's talking; he inquires what time it is, as if he dreaded to hear twelve at noon, and promises to be down in a moment. In an incredibly short time, a tall boy, looking not unlike Hope, comes running down stairs in holiday dress. He does

not hear a word about breakfast and the luncheon that he will need. He is off to the barn, and there stands Louis impatiently waiting for him.

Hope is in trouble. Oscar is just the boy, she says, to forget he has not had a mouthful to eat until he hunts away. She does not quite like to go out to the barn to speak to him, for Oscar is in the age when he does not like "to be interfered with by a woman." She sees the pleasure-wagon rolled out, then the horses, what steed she is! Louis helps to harness them, runs to his own stable as if some matter of life and death depended upon his speed. Fritz Crantz's successor has been ready one full hour, and had nothing to do but to make war with the big flies, who, mean things that they are, are always ready to take advantage of a horse's helpless condition. Fritz starts now as if he was grateful for his release, which indeed he has reason to be, but Hope sees him come prancing up with dismay. Once seated with reins in their hands, and an excursion before them, who ever knew boys remember their breakfast! Winny has caught the alarm, but in the commissary department she is wiser than Hope. It takes only one shout from her strong lungs and the horses are all standing still.

"Why, what are you arter, Oscar Evans? going away without a bite of these 'ere trout that you were out arter dark to catch, and they be here all fried to a crisp too; now I'd be a fool and be done with it, but

I wouldn't go a driving off to Southbridge without no more food than if I was a slave, or some of them things, and here are the cakes, too. Come along, and bring Louis; it won't hurt him no way to have a bite."

"I wouldn't stop for all the trout and cakes in Vermont," said Oscar, snapping his whip.

"Now, who ever seed sich a boy! Weel then, you just stop cracking that thing, and wait till you get your lunch; you don't suppose 'cause you ain't hungry, nobody else ain't, do you? Why, them railroad children, they will expect some of Winny's tea-cakes as much as they expect you, and more too."

Oscar thought this good sense, and consented to stop if she would only be quick. Quick, in boys' parlance, meant not Winny's time at all; so the first thing Oscar saw was Hope and Etta laden with the trout and cakes. They did look good, and it was astonishing how much better they tasted out in the open air, seasoned with constant calls to the restive horses, than they would have in the close dining-room. By the time the boys had made a hearty meal, Winny made her appearance with a formidable-looking basket filled with the nicest of luncheon varieties. Everything was ready, and Hope stood watching the waggons disappear down the hill with her eyes filled with tears of joy. When they returned, Norman and Grace would be once more with them.

But it is quite time we gave a little account of these two, and why their coming was such an event. Norman after his fever had never recovered the strength and health which he had before. He had gone into his bed a boy, he left it a man, not only in growth of body but in expansion and power of mind. After his mother's death he had made the question, why God had preserved him? a matter of close inquiry, and he found but one answer: that was, that the whole of his future life might be devoted to his service. He felt that he was not going to be able to perform daily hard work upon the farm for any length of time without an early breaking down, if not death. Oscar seemed much better fitted for it; and the progress which he had made during his sickness in doing what had before been his work, gave promise of his surpassing him in usefulness on the farm. He would then follow out the bent of his mind; go to college and into a profession. His family needed help; for business he had no inclination; and though in a profession it would take time to earn money, still, success would bring it; and Norman made no plans for life in which he did not hope to succeed. He very well knew success is only another name for patient perseverance in well-doing, and that he felt sure he could and should do. To his studies, therefore, Norman turned his whole attention, [illegible] walking to Grafton to recite to Mr. Wood, who [illegible] ready to aid him, and in the mean time doing

what he could upon the farm to help matters there. In six months he fitted himself to enter —— College, through which he had worked his way as so many other young men do, by depriving himself of all but the barest necessities of life, teaching all his vacation, instead of taking rest and recreation, and borrowing small sums of money of a kind friend who would willingly have changed the loan into a gift had Norman been willing to accept it. There was one assistance which had always been a mystery to him, and which this visit home was to unfold. For the last two years he had been receiving from time to time small sums of money anonymously. They came to him in a soiled yellow envelope, without any handwriting but that in the direction. For some time Norman had put these all aside, it being impossible to discover the sender, but as they continued to come with quarterly regularity, he at last began to depend upon them and to use them as direct gifts from a kind heavenly Father. College days were now over; he had just graduated, taking the highest honours, and what was better, bringing away from college the respect and affection of teachers and mates as a Christian scholar. He had not been at home for two years; no wonder then that his coming was a holiday. Grace was to come too, but where has she been? Her mother's death, and the circumstances attending the first year of their life in Glenburn, had produced a wonderful effect upon

her. It had not made her perfect, far from it; but it had given her a strong desire to be a Christian; and the strong desire, which was the Spirit of God calling to her, has led her to the foot of the cross, and there she has longed to do something for Him who has done so much for her. She is not needed at home. Maud and Guy are big children now, and still cling as they always have to Hope; and Hope thinks with Winny all the cares are very light. Grace can go and teach, in this way doing, she hopes, double good; so she takes a responsible situation, and carries into it, first, to make others love her, her beautiful face and lively winning ways: then, she has learned now to be faithful and true; and the exactness with which she performs her least duties makes her ruler over much. Last year Grace could not come home. Hope in her warm heart feels troubled, and fears her pretty sister is learning to spend too much money on her dress, and has done some extravagant or foolish thing; but when she writes to beg her to be prudent, and save all she can for her future need, Grace only replies by a letter so full of witty raillery that Hope does not mention it again. Now she has been to —— to see Norman graduate; and Norman has been very proud of his beautiful sister, though he has never learned to love her as well as his "little Birdie," hidden away in her nest among the Green Mountains. They are to be at the depôt in Southbridge at four o'clock; it is not yet

eight in the morning, yet Oscar and Louis are far over the fifteen miles which separate it from Glenburn.

This will be a very long, watching day for those who are left at home. Maud and Guy will not be easily amused; and as for occupation, that is soon as fairly laid aside as if the Sabbath were here. By half-past three Mr. Evans, Hope, and the children, attended by Rosette, have started to meet the waggons. Oscar brought Norman and Grace, and Louis brought the luggage. Guy was sure he could hear the rumbling of the waggons, and distinguish the steps of the horses as they passed the bridge by the Forge; so they all sat down on the old log that Norman nailed a back on to so many years ago, and will wait there until they come. It is half-past four, very probably the cars are not in yet, but this group do not know that. Hope and her father talk much of "the children." Have they altered—how—what would they seem like? Would Norman be happy with them now he was such a great scholar, and so very, very wise? Would Grace think home looked pleasant, now she had been in so much finer places since she went away? Hope had a cheerful answer to make to all these questions. She only wished there was not that shadow on her father's face; a shadow thrown there she well knew by the wish for a very different home to which to welcome his children. The shadows began to lengthen on the open ground around them; the westering sun had

sunk down below the distant hills, and the soft, lulling twilight music was filling the air before Guy heard the wheels and the horses on the bridge, but now they grew quickly more and more distinct. Hope saw her father turn pale, then walk rapidly forward to meet them.

Meetings are pleasant things, too pleasant to mar them by description. In a short time Oscar was walking his horses slowly along with an empty waggon; while all the others, even Louis, who had trusted to Fritz to follow Oscar, with the luggage, came up the road, in a noisy, laughing, shouting party; conspicuous and above every other voice was Grace's.

Winny was filling the front door as usual, when a guest was expected; nor could any one tell whether she gave "to them 'ere blessed children" a welcome of most smiles or tears.

"Home at last!" Norman said this many times that night, with deep, quiet joy, while Grace made the mountain-home echo and re-echo with such merry ringing laughter as had not wakened its quick sympathy since she had been last there.

At family prayers, that night, Mr. Evans offered many grateful words of praise to Him, who out of darkness can bring light, and who can make the evening as well as the morning to rejoice.


XIX.—CONCLUSION.

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HOW much there was to see! how many places there were to which to go! It hardly seemed to Norman and Grace, on the day succeeding their arrival, that they should ever know where to begin, which, of all the places they remembered and loved so well, they should visit first; their mother's grave, they must keep that for the hush of more solemn feeling, but yes, Grace started with her retinue, without waiting to discuss it, to her old school-arbour! There it was; the trees only bending nearer together, as if their green branches had a special veneration for, and desire to shield the spot, the moss that they had brought with their beauty-loving young eyes, had taken root, and spread a carpet, to which no other words would apply but "living green," not a trace beside of the old benches. The desk had long since disappeared, and of the wreaths which were always pendent from the trees, nothing remained now but a few discoloured bits of twine.

Grace led the party, but stopped as she pushed aside the close clinging boughs, as if held back by an invisible hand. Passing swiftly before her, came those days gone for ever: there she sat, the child teacher, with the little group of brothers and sisters all about her. Where were those children now? Men, and women, and youth, were there still, but the child-life had passed into eternity; gone with its record of faithfulness and unfaithfulness—with its tale of truth and falsehood—with its hopes, and fears, and doubts, and certainties; it was theirs no longer,—it belonged to the future and to their God. Grace's lips moved in a silent prayer; for her, at least, there had been recorded much that required forgiveness and blotting out.

But the others had little sympathy with this mood now: the scene was too familiar to excite in them much feeling, and they were eager to visit the "old gray woman," whose cap, only a little more lichen-covered, still was visible on the mountain side: then the place in the woods where Louis, Oscar, and Grace, had gone for the bear hunt; where they found still the tall blackened trees, bare and gloomy as if scathed by lightning, rather than by children's fire; where the trunk with its slippery round sides still made the only bridge over the clear, rapid stream, and into which Louis looked with the eager angler's eye, for the speckled trout.

The young party had less sympathy with Norman,

in his excursion into the barn, and over the rich, promising harvest-field; nor could they account for the look of trouble which he brought back, from seeing the work of ruin which was going on, in leaning, broken fences, in dilapidated buildings, making him feel how true it is that the "destruction of the poor is their poverty."

Many weeks, indeed months of enjoyment were crowded into one day; it was one to which the young people loved to look back, through the whole of their future lives. The next day came one of the soft August rains,—

> "Sweet dropping of a summer rain,
> Falling on the ripened grain—
> As once upon the flower."

It was no less welcome than the bright sunshine, for they could spend it all together in the house; and such an unpacking, such a delightful feeling of having come home, surely there never was before.

All the old articles carried away had a strange yet familiar look. Hope found herself handling those that had borne the brunt of a college life with a peculiar reverence, almost as if they were relics of a hard struggle, well fought, nobly won. But Grace's trunk was, after all, one of the greatest mysteries to Hope. Grace had been in the receipt of a good salary, and yet here were no additions to her wardrobe that spoke of anything but the strictest and neatest economy. What had become of the money spent? in what way could

Grace have parted with it? As she came to the bottom of the trunk Hope was unpacking, she came upon an envelope directed to her father, and taking it up she said, "See here! Grace hasn't quite forgotten all her old careless ways. Here is a letter directed to father, all ready to post and never sent! I dare say this is the very one that I walked almost down to Grafton to meet, and only met a disappointment."

"Hardly so," and Grace's cheeks flushed and her eye brightened; "I wrote that the very morning I left my school; it is for father now."

"Run with it to him, Guy; he always loved a letter from Grace so well, it would be a pity to deprive him of this, even if she has told him all that is in it. But now we are on the subject of letters, here is the portfolio. Take it, Norman; I daresay you will find a half dozen written to me."

Norman took the portfolio, laughing, and began to look over it carelessly; but suddenly his attention was arrested; he took out a half sheet of paper quickly, and carried it to the window.

"There, now," said Maud, "Norman has found it! I thought there must be something very queer in Grace's portfolio; she always had such a lot of things. Just look at this face."

At this moment, Hope, with a ludicrous face of alarm and inquiry, was holding up a patched and repatched garment before Grace, in mute inquiry.

"Well, what is the matter with it, Miss Particular?" said Grace, laughing. "You don't find any holes or stitches as long as your arm, as Winny used to say, do you?"

"No; but, Grace, it does look so very poor."

"And no wonder," said Norman, coming toward them, with the paper still in his hand. "Grace, I know it all now. God bless you!"

Grace's eye fell on the tumbled and blotted sheet which he held in his hand; and in an instant the tears rushed into her eyes, and her head fell.

"Oh, Norman!" she said, with a trembling voice, "how could you? Hope, what did you give him that for?"

Hope was looking from one to the other, in the utmost astonishment; at length she asked,—

"Why, Norman, what is it? You frighten me."

"Have you ever seen this handwriting before?" said Norman, holding the paper out before her.

Hope saw nothing but confused and straggling marks; she had never seen it.

"But I have; it is the same that brought to me all the money I have been receiving anonymously for the last two years. That N is identical with the one that was on the last envelope containing fifty dollars for the graduating suit."

"And I am sure," said Grace, interrupting him, "I enjoyed it more, a thousand times, when I saw how handsomely my brother looked in it, than I could to

have spent it any other way. My money is my own, I suppose, Norman; and if I have a mind to throw it away, I rather think it's none of your business."

"Dear, generous, noble-hearted Grace," said Hope, warmly.

"Now, don't go to calling me names; for those I am in no mood to bear at all," said Grace, half laughing, and half crying. "Come, Norman, give me that paper, and promise never to say another word about it, that is a good boy."

Norman folded the paper, put it carefully away, and without another word left the room. He had hardly gone before Mr. Evans came in; but Grace now quickly made her escape, and Hope saw her through the window, walking swiftly toward the woods, in the fast-falling rain.

"See here, Hope!" said her father, holding toward her three bills. "These are a present from Grace. I think you will feel satisfied now, that she has not wasted her money on herself."

Hope took the bills, and read on each, "'One hundred dollars.' And she has gone," she said, "that she need not be thanked. No one but Grace would have thought of such things."

She then told her father of the discovery of the donor of Norman's money; and pointing to the trunk of mended and old worn clothes, said, "That will finish the story."

Winny came in to be told it all, Guy having rushed into the kitchen, with an indistinct tale of something great that had happened; and standing over the trunk with folded hands, while the tears streamed down her cheeks, she sobbed out, "God bless her! God *will* bless her; dear child, she is so faithful to ye all. Now, Mr. Evans, never give up agin; never say that 'ere little word, that never was made for no good—discouraged; 'cause you see the Lord he is mightier than us all; and the lots are cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of Him, nevertheless. Here's this 'ere child, there wan't making nothing out on her, 'cause you see it wasn't in her, this being faithful and true; but you prayed about her, Mr. Evans, you know you did; and even old Winny, she never forgot to do so. And now you just see, Mr. Evans, that's just how it has come out here. Oscar, too, was sich a careless, good-for-nothing boy; and you see him, why he's as regular as an eight-day clock. Don't I always know that Dapple's milk always comes in in the six quart pail, and never fails, no more than if he was Methuselah, of course I do. He is just as faithful as the sun, Mr. Evans; and if you ain't thankful, but I know you be, then it's jist a sin and a shame, and nothing more. Mrs. French-woman (Winny always called her so) says Louis is jist so; she thinks eeny most as much on him as she does on his father, and that's a lot, everybody knows."

Then, there came floating over Winny's mind indis-

tinct visions of rewarding Grace, by making her something nice to eat, as she used to, when she was a child; so she hurried away to accomplish it. The children went out to look for Norman and Grace, and Mr. Evans and Hope were left to talk over the events of the day alone.

As the future of this family has been no further disclosed to us, we must here bring our story to its close. There can be no pleasanter time to leave them, than on this day, when Mr. Evans could so distinctly trace, in the good developments and great improvements of his family, the powerful working of the principle which it had been his aim so constantly to inculcate.

Hoping my young readers will find in these pages incitements to make this also one of the guiding rules of their own lives, I commend them earnestly to the care and love of Him who will choose for himself, in that day of his glory when the heavens shall be opened, and He shall be seen sitting in regal majesty upon his white horse—not the title of King of kings and Lord of lords, the great I Am, Jehovah, Almighty, but only to be called, "FAITHFUL AND TRUE."